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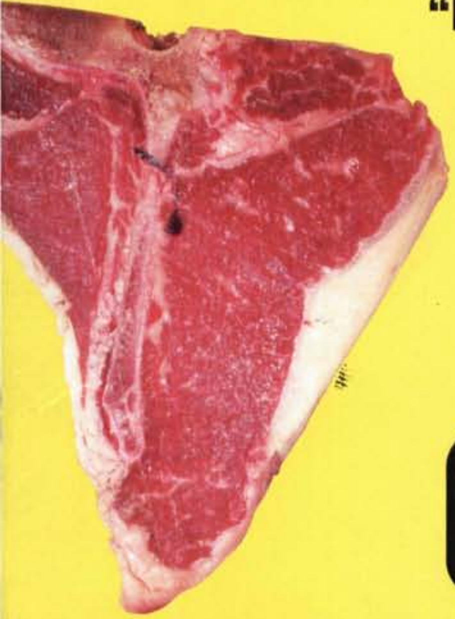

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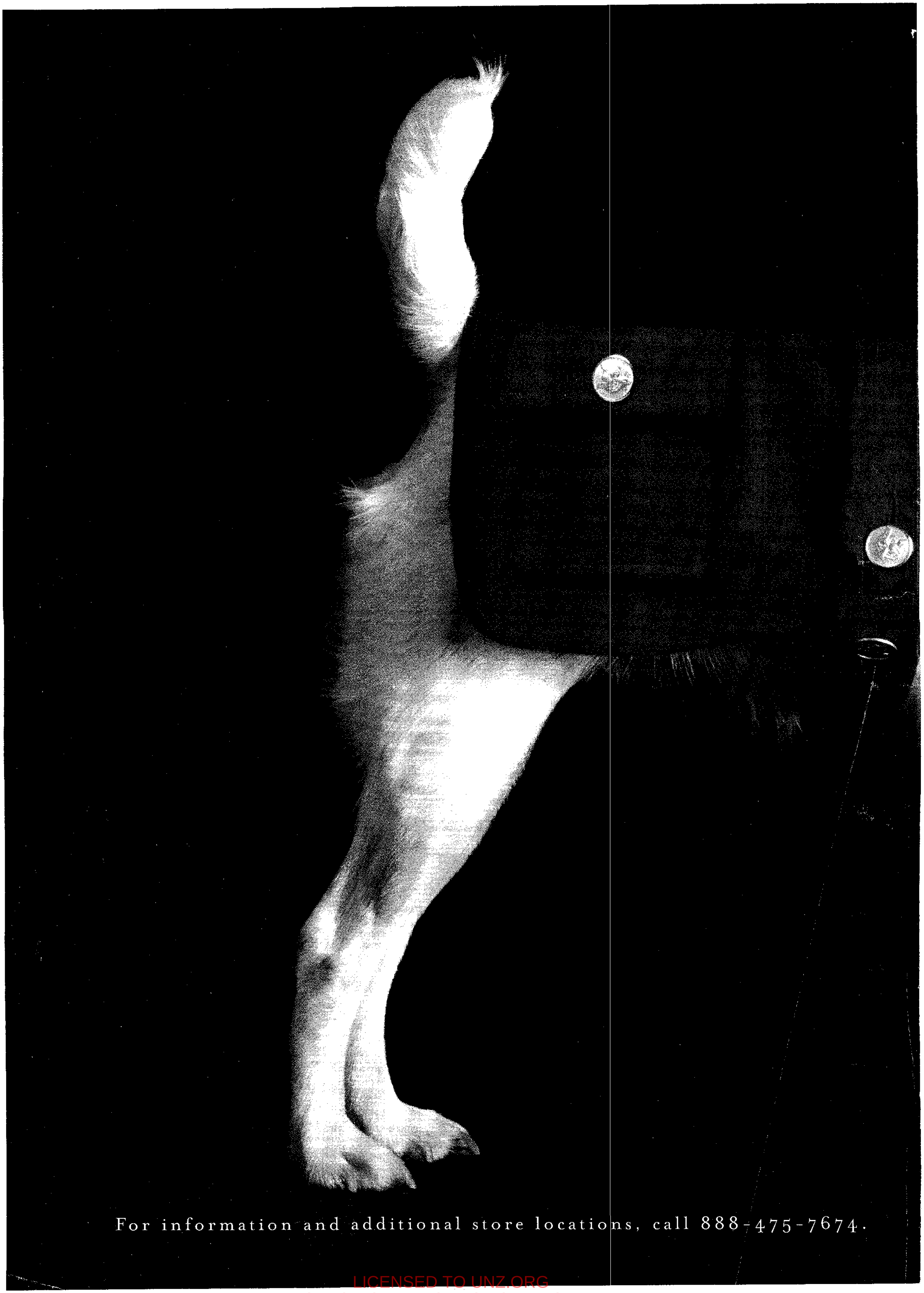

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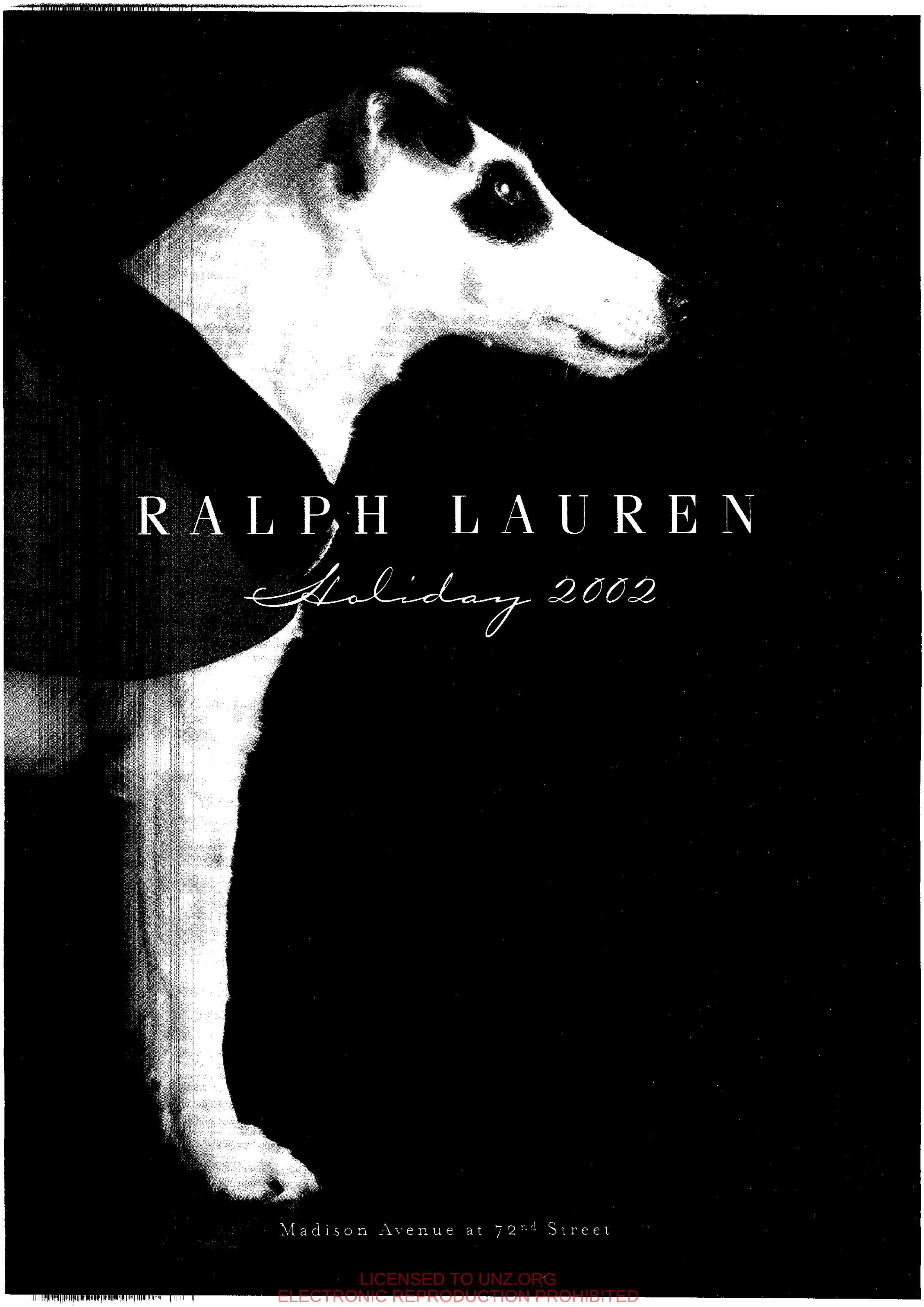

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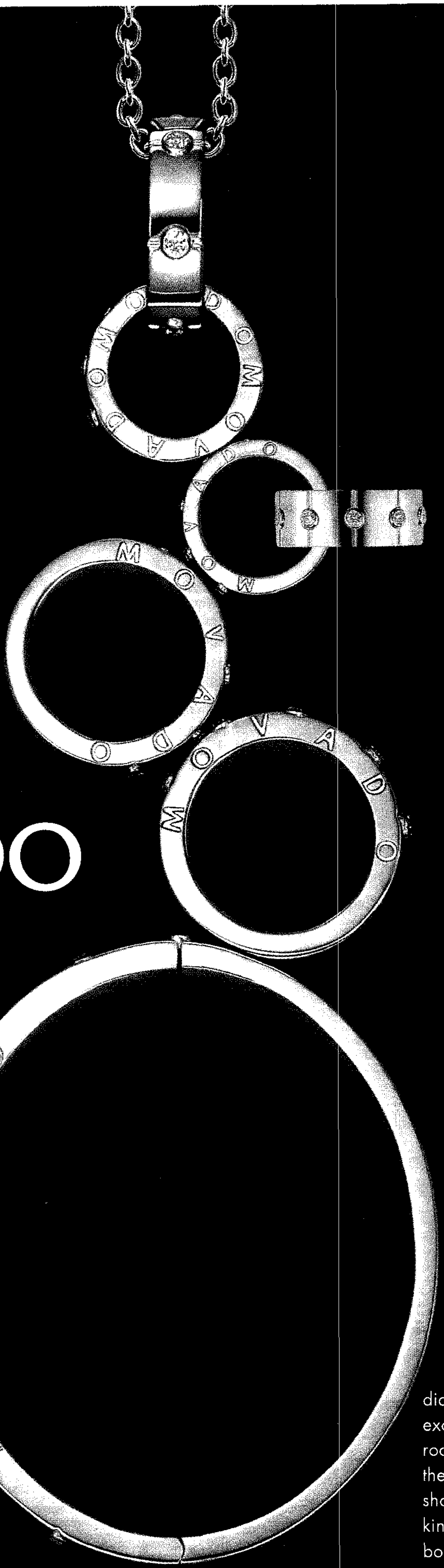

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'Guardian' Crossword

WHEN IN ROME: Martin Scorsese and Cameron Diaz on the set of *Gangs of New York.*

> "Make no mistake, this is Marty's movie, top to
> completely uncompromising."
> —Harvey Weinstein, page

FEATURES

28 *Gangs* Up By Alex Williams

It took Martin Scorsese 30 years to complete the film that first took hold of his imagination in the seventies, when he picked up Herbert Asbury's juicy pop history *The Gangs of New York*. Over the years, Scorsese steadfastly refused to downsize the sweeping epic he'd always envisioned: a New York City creation myth with the marquee names—Leonardo DiCaprio, Daniel Day-Lewis, Cameron Diaz—to match. Still, some wonder: Are audiences ready for a long, brutal movie about nineteenth-century gangs? **Plus: Greg Donaldson** on the state of New York's street gangs.

36 Bye-Bye, Bagel By Ariel Levy

Weight-conscious New Yorkers (and who among us isn't?) used to believe that while diets came and went, some things were constant: Whole grain equalled healthy, and bacon was about as bad as it gets. Suddenly, the tables have turned, and the Atkins diet—which embraces protein and fat and considers carbs the enemy—is taking the town by storm, igniting a passionate debate among diet tribes. Throwing a dinner party? Don't even *think* about serving pasta.

42 Thoroughly Modern Morris By Jennifer Senior

Outspoken, flamboyant, and irresistibly watchable, Mark Morris was always the lovable bad boy of contemporary dance, a choreographer who had more in common with ballet god George Balanchine than with the modern masters. Now he oversees one of the best-kept (and best-looking) companies in the dance world from his own $7 million state-of-the-art center, where they're readying his *Nutcracker* riff, *The Hard Nut*, for its first New York performance in nine years. And he's even cut his trademark mane.

ON THE COVER: PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAMES WORRELL. FOOD STYLING BY ED GABRIEL/HALLEY RESOURCES.

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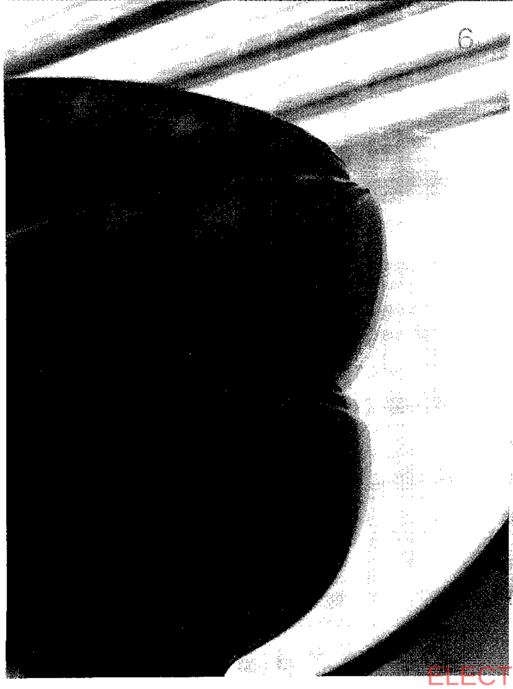

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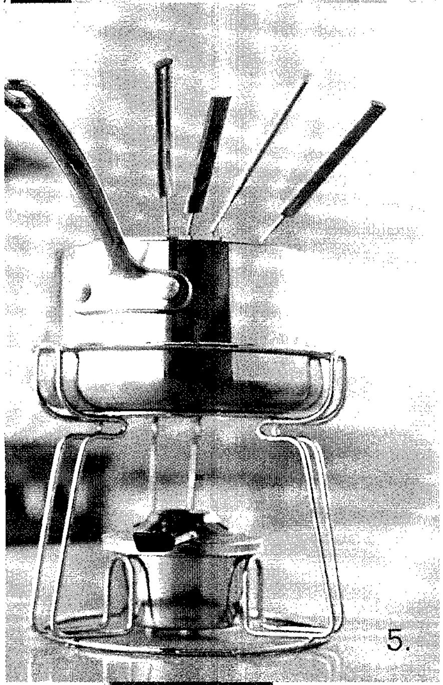

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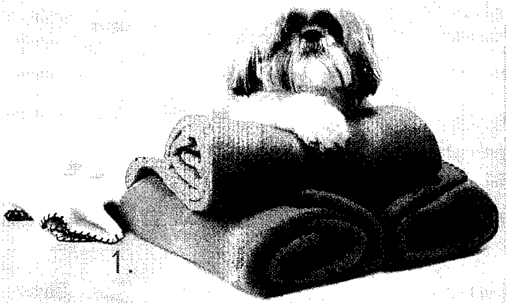

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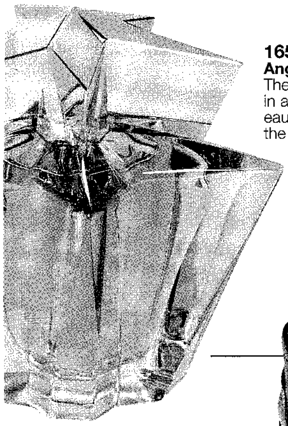

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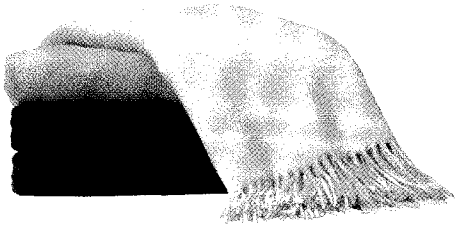

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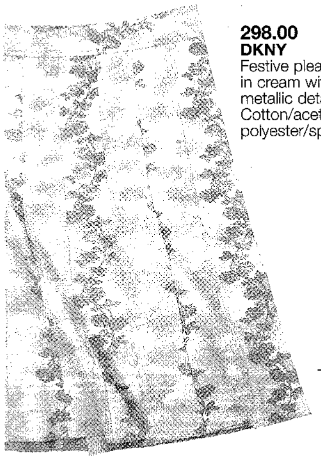

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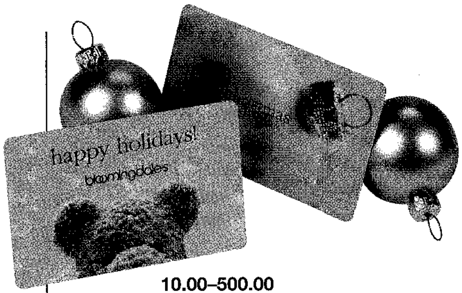

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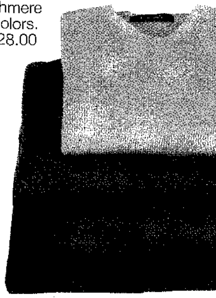

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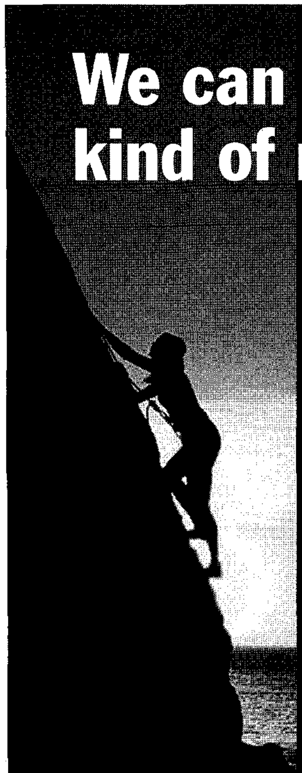

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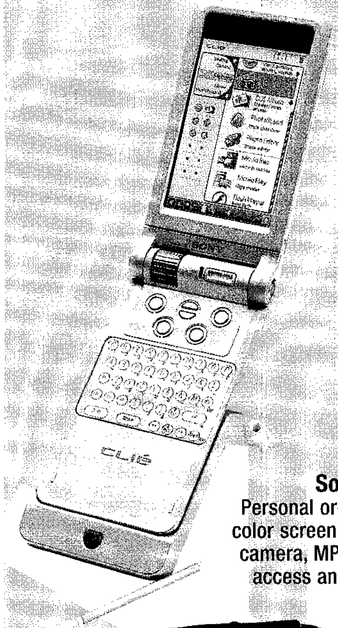

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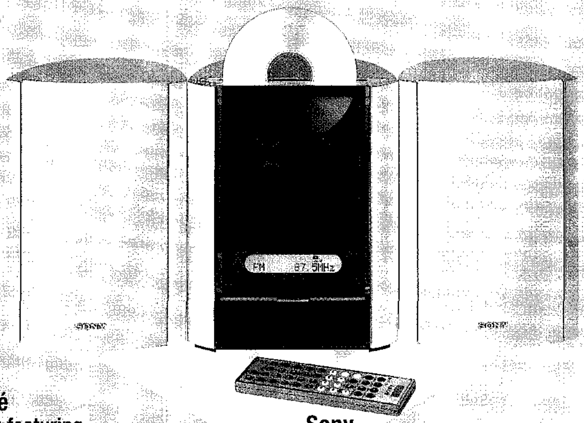

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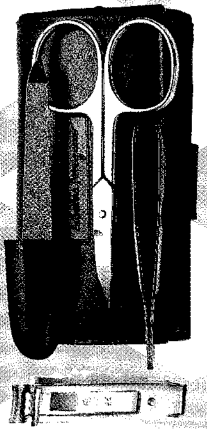

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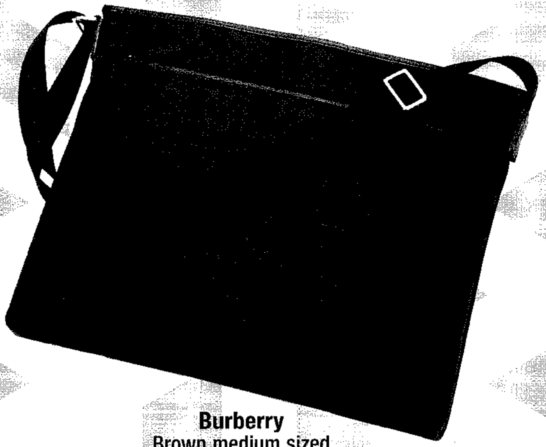

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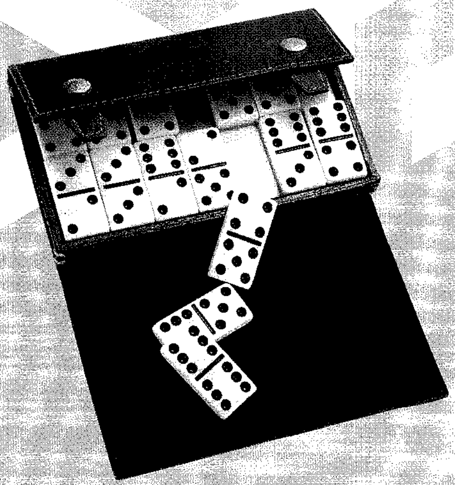

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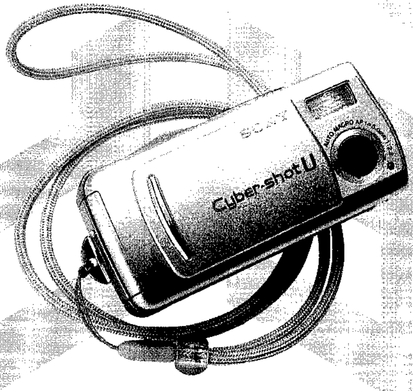

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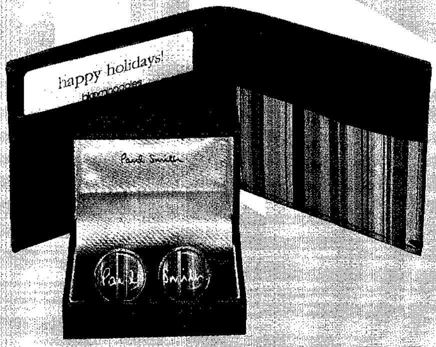

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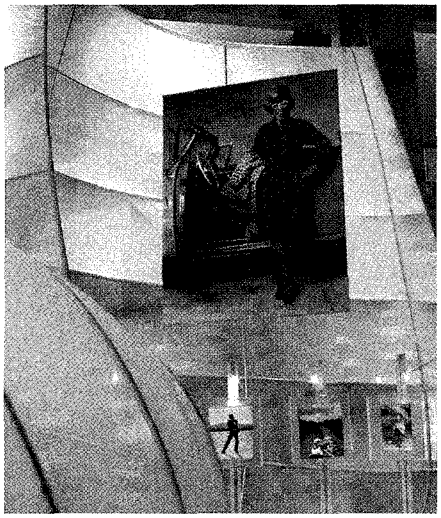

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Letters

> When did the left abdicate ownership of the American flag to the right?
>
> —John A.C. Kennedy

A Toque-n Mention

For the past 30 years, I have had all of the pleasures and aggravations of being a restaurateur in various cities around the United States. I never argue with critics (well, almost never), on the grounds that in my business, if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. After reading Gael Greene's "Chef Power" [November 11], however, and searching in vain among the "Super Stars," "Great Chefs," and "Top Toques" for the name of David Burke, I felt compelled to. Mr. Burke, the chief culinary executive at Smith & Wollensky Restaurant Group, has worked with, taught, and mentored many of the recipients of Ms. Greene's highest accolades, and over the past thirteen years has made the Park Avenue Café one of New York's classic restaurants. It is hard to see how one of the most creative culinary geniuses in the industry could have been left off your list.

Alan N. Stillman, MANHATTAN

Gael Greene responds: For his often whimsical creativity and his role as mentor to a coven of star chefs, David Burke should have been listed as a legend.

It's the Stupids, Economy

James J. Cramer's "Bubble Boys" ["The Bottom Line," November 25] revives memories of one of President Reagan's favorite tactics: When the only alternatives are to appear vicious or to appear stupid, choose stupid; it's more endearing. Reagan and his spinmeisters made it work for him. Does Mr. Cramer expect it to work for the Wall Street analysts he defends, who were paid plenty to be both honest and competent but could not find a way to be either? What could his own interest be in making this shabby case?

John Costa, MANHATTAN

Don't Show Dem the Money

Michael Tomasky's column on the Democratic debacle was timely and thought-provoking ["The City Politic: Party Like It's 1984," November 18]. If the Democrats are to rebound, they must overcome the addiction to fund-raising that has paralyzed their ability to think creatively.

Gilbert Waters, SARASOTA, FLA.

Patriot Games

David Amsden's piece on the hubbub generated by the display of the American flag in a West Village apartment-building lobby ["Gotham: Bohemian Blasphemy," November 25] served to point up a phenomenon with which I've never fully been able to come to terms: When, exactly, did the left abdicate ownership of the flag to the right? Displaying the flag does not imply an endorsement of the president's current foreign-policy positions.

John A.C. Kennedy, MANHATTAN

O, Hanukkah Bush

There is no such thing as a Hanukkah bush ["All I Want For . . . ," by Sara Cardace and Jada Yuan, November 25]. Is there a Christmas menorah? You should have known better.

Roni Kansagor, CLEARWATER, FLA.

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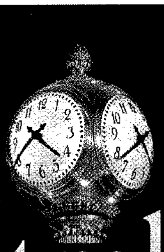

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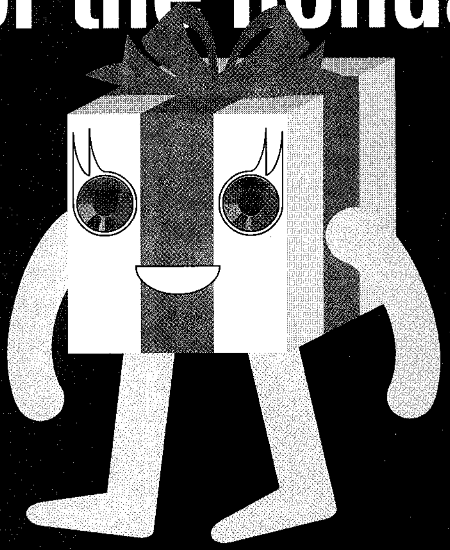

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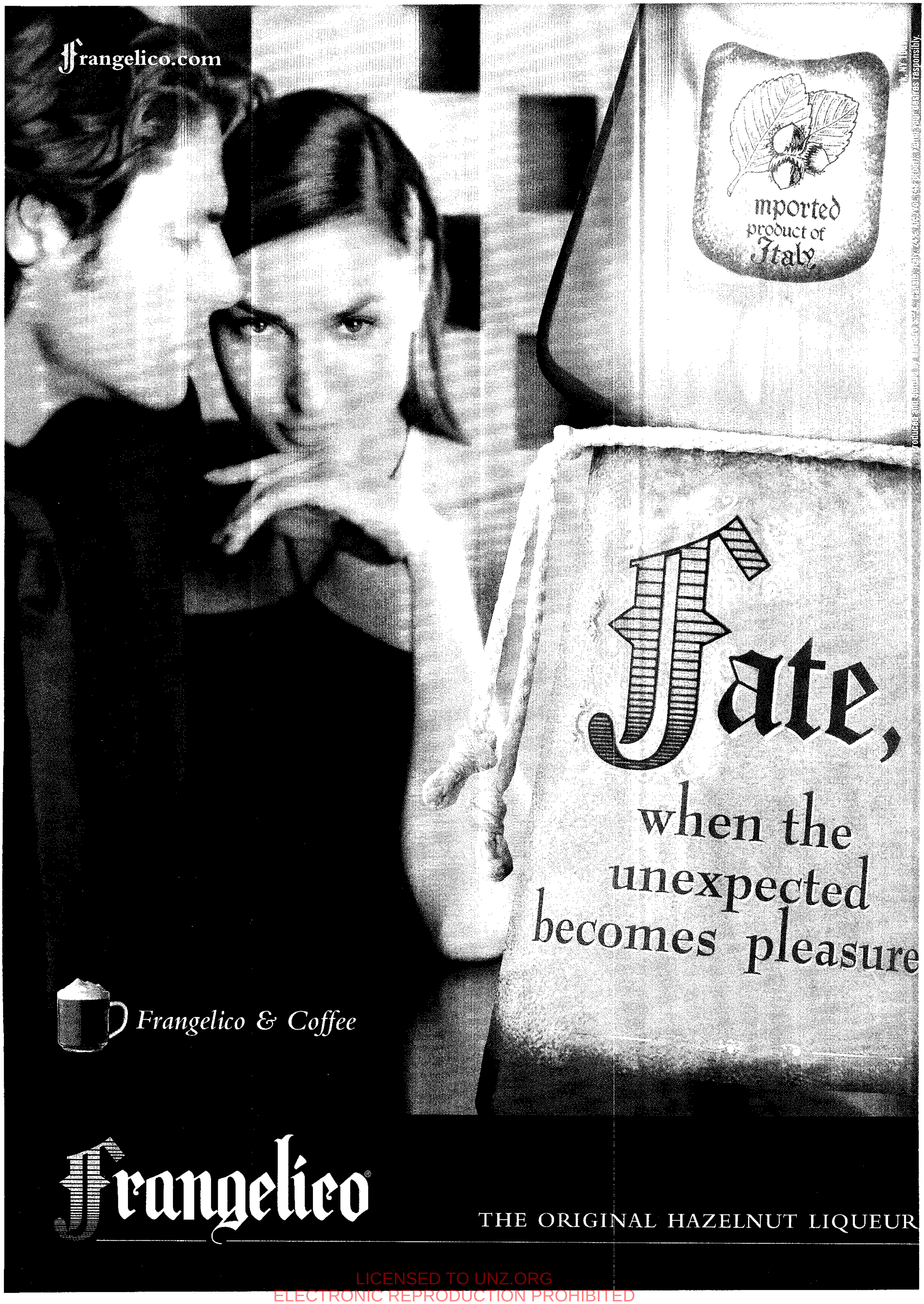
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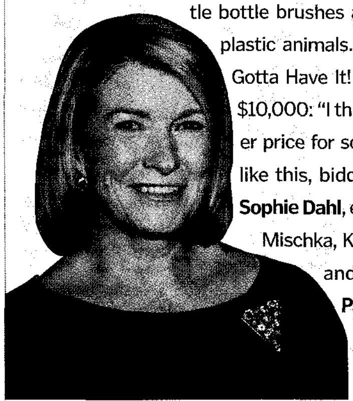
By Marc S. Malkin

La Bohème Has the Write Stuff

It isn't everyone who can get into a Broadway show in previews, but even the jaded—and connected—theatergoers with tickets for *La Bohème's* first night were thrilled when director **Baz Luhrmann** made a surprise pre-show appearance. "He walked out onto the stage and said, 'Hi, I'm the director,' " says one audience member. "The crowd went nuts; they clapped for a good minute or so." Luhrmann explained that there were still a few kinks in the production—and indeed, on top of the twenty-minute intermission, there were unusually long breaks between the four acts—"but no one seemed to mind—a lot of people were more surprised that the singing was in Italian." Backstage, Luhrmann recently presented the 200 cast and crew members with specially designed *Bohème* pens from Montblanc worth $195 each. And the writing doesn't stop there: Luhrmann's wife, **Catherine Martin**—the designer responsible for the show's costumes and stage sets—is creating *Bohème* window displays at Montblanc boutiques across the country.

Martha Is Nice—Not Naughty

In spite of the ImClone scandal, her falling stock price, and Kmart's taking her out of its ads, **Martha Stewart** just might avoid getting coal in her stocking this year. As it turns out, the domestic diva has been rather nice lately. She designed a holiday wreath to be auctioned off on December 15 at the Arcadia Gallery in a benefit for the Treatment Action Group, an AIDS-advocacy organization. The concoction is made of intertwining white-bristle bottle brushes and decorated with metallic-painted plastic animals. Auction expert **Robert Schagrin**, of Gotta Have It! Auctions, predicts it will fetch up to $10,000: "I think infamy can certainly create a higher price for something like this. And with charities like this, bidding gets voracious." **Sharon Stone**, **Sophie Dahl**, event designer **Anthony Todd**, Badgley Mischka, Kiehl's, interior designer **Dennis Adler**, and *New York* Magazine shutterbug **Patrick McMullan** have also created wreaths for the auction.



SANTA'S HELPER: Martha Stewart.

Evan Jones Gets Red Carpet Burns

At least one actor from **Eminem**'s film *8 Mile* seems to be bringing the movie's tough-guy antics to real life. Our spy spotted **Evan Jones** (who plays Em's sidekick, Cheddar Bob) at the L.A. premiere of *Friday After Next*. Jones was smoking outside the Mann National Theater, blocking the red-carpet entrance. "The security guy told him to move," reports the spy. "He did, but just to the front of the fire doors. Then another guard came over." Jones's response? "Get off my fucking case!" We're told that when the guard threatened to kick him out, Jones said, "Don't worry. I'm putting it out, asshole," dropped the cigarette at the guard's feet, and stamped it out on the red carpet.

MIDTOWN MADNESS: **Sharon Osbourne** and son **Jack** are so proud of the family bulldog, Lola, for finally learning to do her business outdoors that they picked out a $148 black doggy vest for her at the Coach boutique on 57th Street. Sharon also treated herself to a light-blue alligator clutch, a lizard makeup pocket mirror, and a pair of black leather pants. . . . In other shopping news, "Page Six" recently reported that **Russell Crowe** picked up a $10,000 Cartier watch for his girlfriend, **Danielle Spencer**. That same day, Crowe was also spotted heading for the VIP room at Harry Winston. Our spy tells us that he saw a salesperson handing Crowe a Winston bag chock-full of wrapped boxes before he got back into his car. . . . We also hear that Rudy Giuliani is throwing fiancée Judy Nathan a birthday party at Le Cirque on December 16.

JEWEL IN THE ROUGH: Russell Crowe.

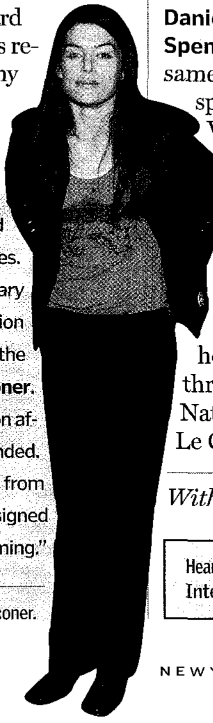
With Aric Chen.

Heard any good gossip lately? E-mail us: Intelligencer@NewYorkMag.com

Downey Flaunts His (Ex) Love

DOWNEY SOFT: Robert Downey.

Robert Downey Jr., whose most recent drug arrest was last year and who has been sober ever since, seems to be making up for tough times. In return for hosting a party for *Flaunt* magazine's fourth anniversary and W Hotels' third CD, *Rhythm and Muse II*, at the W Hotel in Union Square this week, a source tells us, the actor insisted he get to pick the night's performer: his ex-wife, model turned singer **Deborah Falconer**. The two, who have a 9-year-old son, **Indio**, were married in 1992, soon after Downey's seven-year relationship with **Sarah Jessica Parker** ended. They separated in 1996. Now we hear Downey's paying to fly her in from L.A. and put her up. Downey's rep insists that Falconer was already signed for the gig before he agreed to host but admits that "he wouldn't be hosting if she wasn't performing." *Flaunt* publisher **Luis Barajas** also told us Falconer was chosen before Downey and that the mag and the W are paying her way.



CALIFORNIA DREAM: Deborah Falconer.

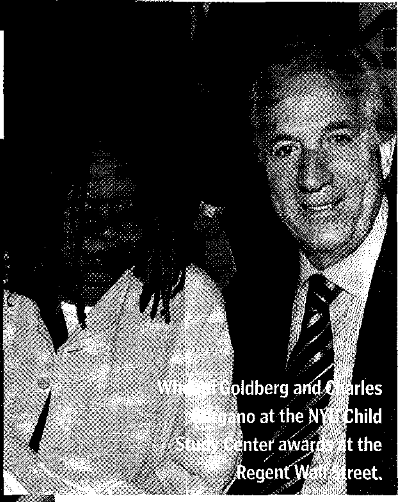
PHOTOGRAPHS: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP, ROBIN PLATZER/TWIN IMAGES; SPORTSPHOTO, LTD./ALLSTAR; AMY GRAVES/GLOBE PHOTOS; LESTER COHEN/WIREIMAGE.

Scene

Liv and Mia Tyler at the New York Public Library for *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* premiere.

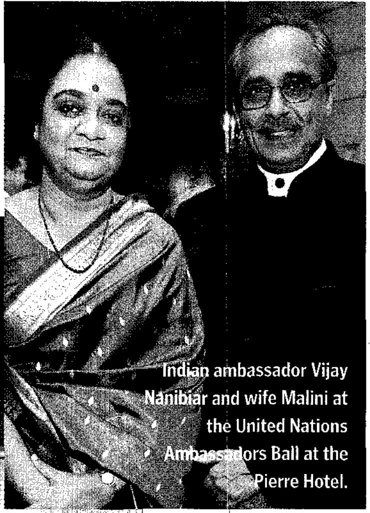
Lili Root Bianchi, Joshua Bell, and Edythe Holbrook at Tavern on the Green for the American Russian Young Artists Orchestra.

Andie MacDowell and hubby Rhett Hartzog at the Ovarian Cancer Research Fund's Legends Gala.



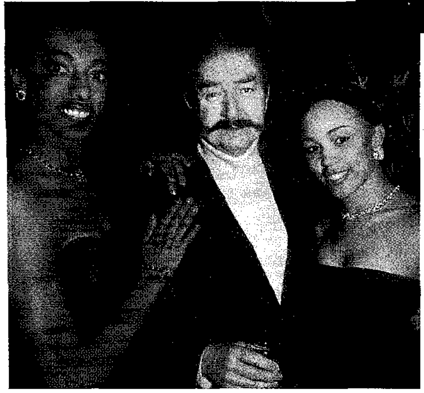
Whoopi Goldberg and Charles Gargano at the NYU Child Study Center awards at the Regent Wall Street.

Louise and Alexandra MacBain and Fe Fendi at the New York City Ballet opening.



Indian ambassador Vijay Nambiar and wife Malini at the United Nations Ambassadors Ball at the Pierre Hotel.

David Guggenheim and wife Elisabeth Shue at the opening of the Powder nightclub in Chelsea.



Rejane Duarte, LeRoy Neiman, and Dannielle Thomas at Cartier for the unveiling of the Maharajah of the Patiala's necklace in honor of the Dance Theatre of Harlem.

John Turturro, Tim Robbins, and Susan Sarandon at the Metropolitan Pavilion for the Vineyard Theatre benefit.

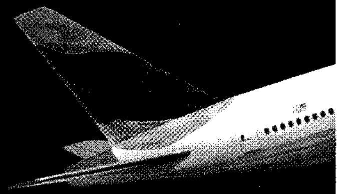
Beautiful Minds

The Ovarian Cancer Research Fund's benefit at the Hammerstein Ballroom on December 2 drew nearly $1.5 million in tickets and donations—not to mention a fleet of gorgeous models. **Milla Jovovich** ogled a Gibson guitar signed by **Steve Van Zandt** and pounced on a Jill Stuart outfit during the silent auction: "Fashion! I'm the most superficial person here." Meanwhile, L'Oréal model **Janice Green** was looking forward to her day in court: "I got jury duty!" she exclaimed. "I don't want to get out of it. I'm a Court TV freak. It's all I watch. I'm gonna be the first model turned forensic scientist." JADA YUAN

Oh, Lord!

"Run! They're coming!" **Sean Lennon** wailed to his friends three nights later, as eager autograph-seekers descended upon them at the New York Public Library. No, this wasn't *A Hard Day's Night* redux; it was *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* premiere, and it was **Sean Astin** the fans were after. **Chloë Sevigny** was also on the prowl—for *LOTR*'s **Viggo Mortensen**: "He is just the most beautiful thing—hairy, sweaty, manly—where is he?" Nearby, **Liv Tyler** approached **Dominic Monaghan**, who plays Merry the hobbit. "I just got bombarded by some dude on acid who offered me crystal," Tyler said. "Oh, I'm sorry," Monaghan replied. "Want to meet my mum and dad?" J.Y.

Photographs by
Patrick McMullan



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The mysterious nexus of all love and money and power—Joan Didion

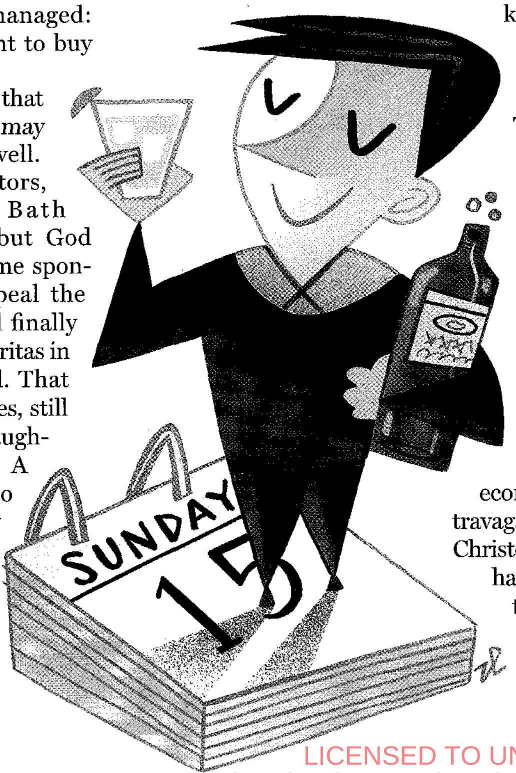
GOTHAM

Chase Those Blues Away

Albany may finally dump the ancient ban on Sunday alcohol sales. Cheers! By Michael Tomasky

James Carville once famously described Pennsylvania as "Philadelphia and Pittsburgh with Alabama in between," and anyone who's driven across that state while scanning the AM radio dial, which yields several doses of Rush Limbaugh, a few Christian broadcasts, and maybe one polka station, can testify that the *Crossfire* host knows whereof he speaks. And yet, last month, the legislators of that supposedly backward state did something that the solons in our progressive New York have never managed: They said it's all right to buy liquor on Sundays.

Now come reports that New York's dry spell may come to an end as well. Two upstate legislators, from Albany and Bath (wherever that is, but God bless it), are the prime sponsors of a bill to repeal the state's blue laws and finally allow us to find the veritas in our vino all weekend. That New York, of all places, still has such a law is a laughable anachronism: A person can go to Eighth Avenue any time of the day or night—Sunday morning, during services at all the nearby churches—and buy rubber sex toys and the most graphic pornography (even with animals, or so we're told by friends) imaginable. That person can also purchase a high-powered rifle with a scope or a semi-automatic pistol. But God forbid you're invited to a dinner party on a Sunday night and you remember on your way there that you don't want to show up empty-handed. Your host had better have a fondness for wilting deli Gerber daisies.



The laws, of course, are a relic of an evangelical rectitude that in this town went the way of the gaslight, and at about the same time. They are also a function of the mom-and-pop-liquor-store lobby, which wants one day a week off and cavils about how Sunday hours would somehow favor larger stores and put them out of business.

But the possibility of repeal raises the question: Just what is Sunday anymore? If indeed it's the Lord's day, then logic and principle should dictate that we shut it all down, from every Gap to the NFL. Commerce, though, has long since displaced religion as the be-all and end-all of Western civilization—it may be more than mere coincidence that in Seattle, home to Microsoft and thus the nerve center of the modern information economy, you can buy any liquor you like at the supermarket on any day of the week. And football, of course, is the quintessence of American maledom. They are untouchable.

But booze: What reprobate is incautious enough to defend its ready availability? It is only around booze that moralists can still cling to the pretense that Sunday is a sacred day. Especially in this season, when nothing less than the world economy depends on the extravagant commercialization of Christendom's holiest event, we hardly need to be reminded that Sunday is now just another day to spend money. Bottoms up.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Ah, the holidays, a time for overeating and merry greetings. But what *sort* of greeting? Unlike Paris, New York's never had an official way to say hello. Kiss, no kiss, double kiss . . . *handshake*? Here's a rundown of the city's Francophiles and germophobes, in case you should run into any of them. AMY LAROCCA

Simon Doonan, Barneys window dresser: "There are so many hideous microbes! I do a *double air* kiss with four feet between me and the other person."

Nan Kempner, socialite: "My doctor says never kiss anybody after October 15 because there are too many germs."

Mario Batali, restaurateur: "I hug if they are Italian and I know them well. When I hug, though, I really hug."

Donald Trump, developer: "If it's a beautiful woman, I always kiss."

Jeff Klein, hotelier: "I'm obsessed with germs, and I won't touch people's hands. With friends, I do a double air kiss."

Lizzie Grubman, publicist: "If they double-kiss, I double-kiss."

Jerry della Femina, adman: "I'm a defensive greeter: I wait for the other person to make the first move."

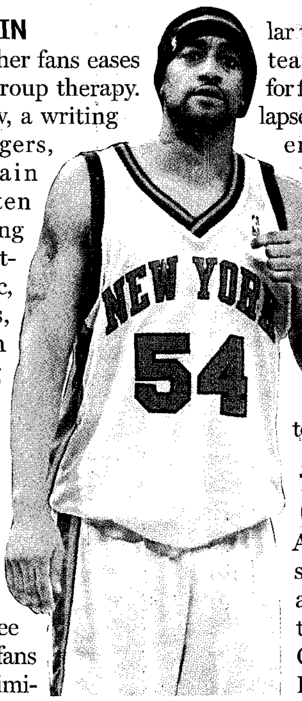
Al D'Amato, politician: "If they have a beard, I give a *handshake and a hug. If not, I* do cheek-to-cheek presses. That's with men. With women, I get so terrified I don't know what to do."

HARTMAN/GLOBE PHOTOS; RJ CAPAK/WIREIMAGE; DJAMILLA ROSA COCHRAN/WIREIMAGE.

Full-Court Distress

We've moved past denial and anger to acceptance: The Knicks just plain stink. But there are still ways to be a fan. By Hugo Lindgren

No young players on the rise, lots of leftover guys whose limitations we know as well as our own—is there any joy to be had from watching the Knicks this year? The truest fans, like season-ticket holder Nora Ephron ("I wish I could just turn away"), have no choice but to try. Here's how they survive:



JUST McADOO IT

Keep your eyes on forward Lee Nailon (pictured), a gangly ball hog who's a throwback to the days of Bob McAdoo, when the only passing in the Garden was of joints in the blue seats. "Nailon's mentality is, I gotta get mine," says painter Alexis Rockman. "That's how it was in the seventies in New York, and that's how it is now. I find it exciting."

SHARE THE PAIN

Bonding with other fans eases the agony, like group therapy. As Jason Dubow, a writing teacher at Rutgers, puts it, "Certain things that often seem to be waning in our culture—ritual, a social fabric, common values, loyalty, etc.—can be found among those who stick with the Knicks."

LA-LA LAND

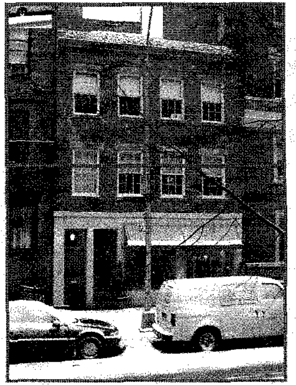
Just as L.A. Dodgers fans split in the seventh inning, novelist Jonathan Dee suggests, Knicks fans should adopt a similar tactic to avoid the team's predilection for fourth-quarter collapses. "Leave after the end of the third quarter," says Dee. "As long as you never look at a sports section, you'll think the Knicks are on their way to a 55-win season."

THE ART OF CHOKING

A true connoisseur might find a way to savor those collapses. Can this year's Knicks equal the single greatest blown lead of all time, the 34-point mark set by the Denver Nuggets in 1994? The Knicks nearly lost a 32-point lead against Detroit earlier this year. Speed counts, too. In the 1995 playoffs, the Knicks blew a 6-point lead in 3.1 seconds—can that be topped?

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

"You have to be a romantic about it," says Gary Hoenig, the executive editor of *ESPN The Magazine*, who used to watch 70 to 80 Knicks games a season. "You have to imagine how this team could scrape out 40 wins and contend for that last playoff spot." Does Hoenig think that will happen? "I only have to believe it long enough to sit through one game."



REAL ESTATE

DEAL OF THE WEEK

HOUSE BOY: Oscar de la Renta's creative director, Adam Lippes, recently spent $3.125 million for a three-floor, 2,700-square-foot townhouse in the Village—and he's only 29! Lippes, who sold his Union Square loft for just under $2 million, paid cash for the fully renovated nineteenth-century home. So how will he style it? "Clean and modern," says his broker, Corcoran's Roseann Barber. Just like Lippes's new unisex underwear line, A+Dam, set to debut next year. JOY ARMSTRONG

Q&A A Dollar and a Dreamer

In 1982, factory worker Curtis Sharp Jr. instantly became a candidate for Sexiest Man Alive when he showed up to collect his $5.6 million New York State lottery winnings with his wife on one arm and girlfriend on the other. Life became a whirlwind of limos, movie premieres, and more women. But with his bad investments, overgenerosity, and excessive spending, Sharp was often broke before his next check arrived. He's had his electricity and phone shut off, and in 1997 the IRS seized his entire check. Next week, Sharp, 64, who moved to Nashville nine years ago and became a Baptist minister, will receive his last check, for less than $50,000. BEVERLY KEEL

How are you preparing to downsize? I've started cutting back already. What I have now isn't much—a couple of homes and cars. I'm not worried.

How would you describe your money-management style? Easy come, easy go.

What were some of your extravagances?
I had a $5,000 car phone at a time when that wasn't popular.

What would you have done differently?
I made a big mistake when I told *Reader's Digest* I would help anybody who needed help. I got so many calls at work that they had to hire another operator.

CAN BUY ME LOVE: Curtis Sharp celebrates with girlfriend Jacqueline Bernabela in 1982 (wife not pictured).

to a fortune!
PI
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Two gam

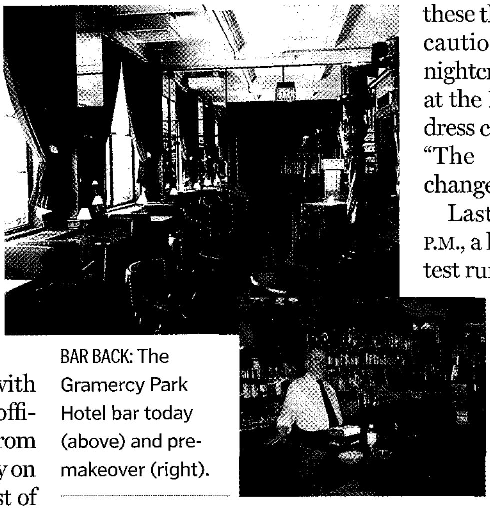
How did your friends react to your winning?
One girl said that me having my wife and girlfriend up there at the same time set back black folks 100 years. But my wife and I weren't really together, and I wanted her to share in the winnings because she is the mother of my children.

Is winning the lottery all it's cracked up to be?
The lottery brought me a false joy. If you abuse it like I did, when it's over, you ain't going to have nothing. Just like I am.

PHOTOGRAPHS: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP, KARL CRUTCHFIELD/AI WIRE; LUKE HOVERMAN; CHARLES FRATTINI/DAILY NEWS.

Raising the Bar

A visit to the newly reopened bar at the Gramercy Park Hotel reveals a classic that's a little less shabby, a little more chic. By Sarah Bernard


BAR BACK: The Gramercy Park Hotel bar today (above) and pre-makeover (right).

After eight months of collecting dust, the storied bar at the Gramercy Park Hotel, a favorite spot of local celebs like Chloë Sevigny and Ethan Hawke, is finally reopening this week. The hotel's new owner, the frighteningly well-connected financier Steven Greenberg, who once co-owned the Roxy and later the Palladium with close friend Ian Schrager, officially took over operations from the troubled Weissberg family on October 1. The bar is the first of the hotel's four revamped public spaces to debut; a parkside lobby bar and a rooftop bar will follow shortly, as will a swank forties-style lounge Greenberg's calling the Cobalt Club—for which he bought up the entire inventory of cobalt-blue glass at the recent Triple Pier shows.

Nostalgic guests will find the once notoriously seedy front room much the same, save for the new crimson drapes and scented candles (lilac!)—though the piano and its regular player, Phyllis, are sadly missing. But behind the bar, Greenberg's fashioned an adjoining lounge from what used to be the dining room, complete with Belle Époque sofas and a dubious mural of the park. The effect is somewhere between Paris and pizza parlor.

Just how will these upgrades go down among the hipster loyalists? "You can never script these things," Greenberg says cautiously, recalling how nightcrawlers initially balked at the Roxy's "no blue jeans" dress code, then embraced it. "The anticipation of the change is the worst part."

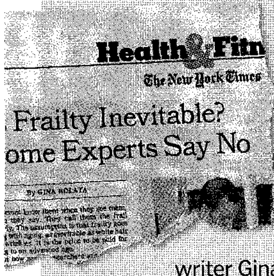
Last Wednesday at 5:30 P.M., a half-hour into the first test run, the bar filled quickly. A Schrager-esque team of two Asian girls with black ponytails and tank tops poured champagne alongside the manager, a Jason Sehorn look-alike—a far cry from the previous bow-tied crew. Even the bar's signature Pepperidge Farm goldfish have gone gourmet, replaced by dry-roasted mini-peanuts and, soon, spring rolls. A traveler from Houston sipping the house Merlot—curiously, out of a Scotch glass—gave his review: "The best house wine I've ever tasted," he said before adding wistfully, "but I'd rather have the goldfish."

BEAUTY BEAT

Wrinkles away! Needles, be gone! It's "Faux-Tox."

If you can't face a needle dripping with Botox but still envy its effect on others, then you may be curious about a brand-new product doctors had been calling Faux-Tox until Botox maker Allergan raised objections. The cream, now dubbed Wrinkle Relax, is apparently a combination of six amino acids that conspire to stifle lines by inhibiting neurotransmitters that initiate muscle contractions (promises, promises!). It doesn't paralyze the frown, but even Botox vets are finding that it extends the life of their usual dose, and according to one Manhattan dermatologist, Howard Sobel, it decreases fine lines by up to 36 percent in four weeks. It's less painful on the wallet than Botox, too. A $75 bottle lasts about three months. BETH LANDMAN KEIL

If You Like Gina Kolata . . . : Times Writer Receives an Unlikely Tribute


Health & Fitn

The New York Times

Frailty Inevitable?
ome Experts Say No

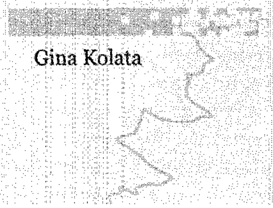
By GINA KOLATA

In the manner of the Dead Kennedys and Marilyn Manson, a band of brainy twentysomething rockers from Brooklyn have chosen to grant New York *Times* science writer Gina Kolata the ultimate (ironic) flattery: They've stolen her name. "I wasn't even aware of her byline until we were looking for a name," says Markus Koelbl, the drummer and a marine biologist. "We liked the sound of it, its rhythm. We wouldn't name ourselves after just any science writer."

While they wasted no time in snatching up the domain name ginakolata.com, they were anxious about potential legal action. They didn't know if Kolata would be flattered, unnerved, or (perhaps worst of all) simply not interested. "I don't know much about her, but I've heard a rumor that that's not her real name," says keyboardist Michael Nonson, a former computer programmer. "I mean, it sounds like *piña colada!* She's gotta have a sense of humor."

"Well, I do think it's hilarious," says Gina Kolata (real name: Gina Kolata), "but my friends say I don't have a sense of humor."

Nonson first alerted Kolata to the band's existence a year ago. "I sort of made it sound like it was a coincidence that we were named Gina Kolata. You know, 'Hey, Gina, we're all fans of yours. And hey, we're also named Gina Kolata!' But I don't think I played it cool enough. I scared her off." Adds Koelbl: "She blew us off."


Gina Kolata

"I get e-mails from them all the time," Kolata says with a laugh. " 'Gina Kolata plays in Brooklyn' or 'Gina Kolata shoots up tryptophan!' They keep inviting me to hear them, but I never go. I live too far away in New Jersey, and I'd have to drive in, and then you're in the city at 2 A.M. on a Saturday. I have to say I did go to their Website to hear them . . . " She trails off. "I don't know . . . it all sounds the same to me." JADA YUAN

ILLUSTRATION BY BARBARA McGREGOR. PHOTOGRAPH (TOP) BY PATRIK RYTIKANGAS.

Michael Tomasky THE CITY POLITIC

Put On a Happy Face

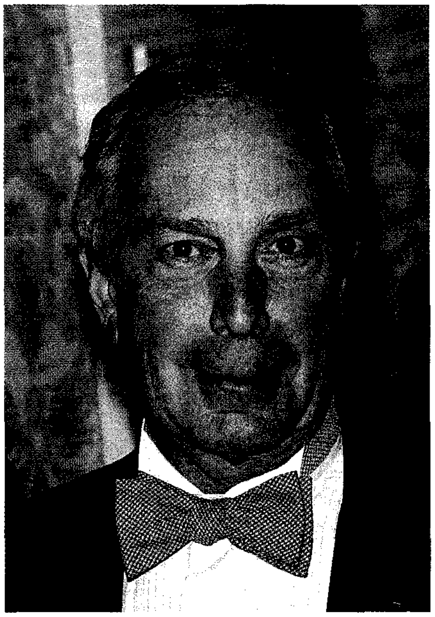
It's not surprising that with looming budget cuts and tax hikes, the mayor's popularity is plummeting, but why is he so reluctant to get out and show us he's more than a suit?

I TRY TO WRITE ABOUT POLLS—OVERUSED, overreported, increasingly unreliable; a plague, basically—as little as possible. But when someone goes from a job rating of 65 percent approving and 6 disapproving (think about that; I mean, 6 percent are against the Girl Scouts!) at the beginning of the year to a more earthly 41–46 tally by November, as Mayor Bloomberg has done in the Quinnipiac surveys, well, maybe that's one poll that's worth thinking about.

Why? Because it reflects what our instincts are suggesting to us: Has this city soured on Mike Bloomberg already? I was on a panel discussing his mayoralty at the New School on November 12. I presented a mostly positive, though hardly rapturous, assessment. My fellow panelists were more downbeat, and more to my surprise, the audience was, too. Not angry. But definitely grumpy. Puzzled—unsure, let's say, of what his priorities and civic passions really are—and worst of all from the mayor's perspective, a little bored.

Odd, because at first, Bloomberg was interesting. He was an unfamiliar type. He came into office as the ultimate blank canvas. This was his greatest boon, even more than his businessman cred, because it allowed us to indulge ourselves in seeing in him whatever we wished. Liberals saw someone who was nicer than Rudy. Conservatives saw a man who won as a Republican, with Rudy's backing, and who would surely govern according to the laws inscribed on the Manhattan Institute's tablets. Moderates put off by entropic, status quo muddlers saw a fellow who might bring a little private-sector innovation to the enterprise.

Now? Liberals are mad about budget cuts. Bob Herbert had at him in the *Times*, lamenting the lack of vision and invoking the specter of service cuts and transit-fare hikes. Conservatives are *really* mad about taxes, and about a mayor whose worldview they see as too Manhattan-centric, not mindful of the outer-borough voters who put him in office (Mark Green beat him in Manhattan). "He's governing like an old-style liberal Democrat," says Bill Stern, a contributing editor of the Manhattan Institute's *City Journal*. And moderates see little of the aforementioned innovation—Fred Siegel, writing in the *Sun*, reproved him for having no imagination and says that the mayor, by hiking taxes without paring down the city payroll in a serious way, "doesn't understand the rhythms of the city's history."


SKIP THE FORMALITIES: Mayor Bloomberg.

That's pretty much the trifecta of scorn.

IS ALL THIS FAIR?

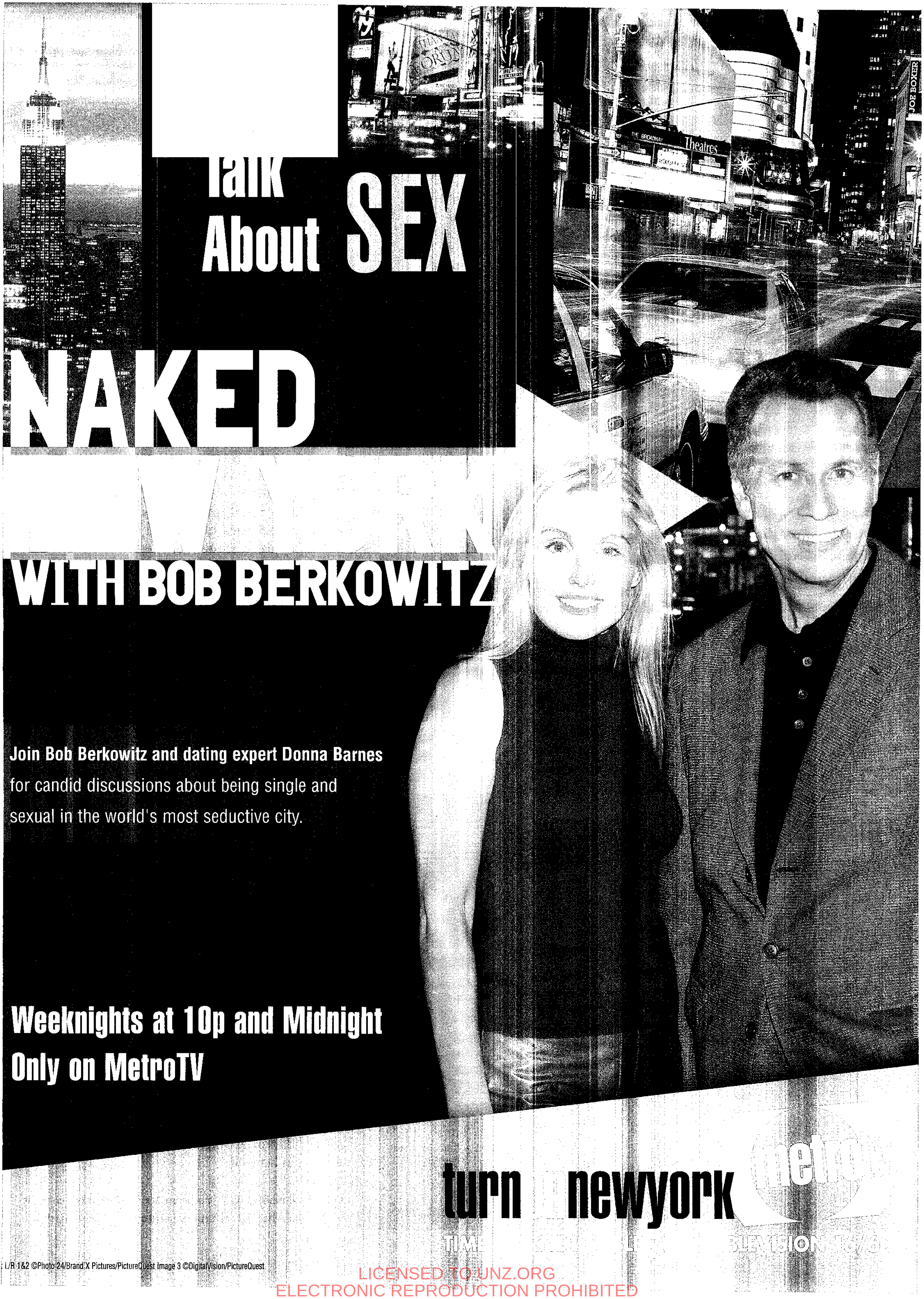
"Fred Siegel may not like to hear this, and the Manhattan Institute may not like to hear this," thunders Bill Cunningham, the mayor's spokesman, "but if they go and check their facts, they will see that Ronald Reagan raised taxes as governor of California two times, Margaret Thatcher raised taxes in 1980, and Fiorello La Guardia raised taxes in the thirties. So which icon do they want to point to?"

Not a bad return of serve. As I (and many people) argued last year, Bloomberg was going to have to raise taxes, and he put it off in the first year chiefly because he didn't want to make any trouble for George Pataki while he was seeking reelection. So this, or some version of this, was inevitable, and if one has to raise taxes, Bloomberg has proposed doing so in ways that are mostly defensible. Single-family homeowners in the city do pay less, sometimes far less, than their counterparts in the 'burbs, so a property-tax hike was kind of an obvious choice.

The other tax idea—reinstating the commuter tax and jacking it up to 2.7 percent from the old .45 percent, while at the same time lowering the city income tax from 3.65 percent to the same 2.7 percent that commuters would pay—is fair in theory. Of the 23 or so localities around the country that charge a tax on residents (some on income, others on wages) and on commuters, 14 of them do so at equal levels. The principle that commuters should pay at the same rate as residents is, then, well established across the country. But there's a catch to this argument, and the catch, this being New York City, is just what you'd expect it to be: All of those 14 have rates that are a good deal lower. Portland, Oregon, for example, hits residents and commuters alike for .62 percent; Pittsburgh takes 1 percent; Columbus (Columbus?) gets 2 percent.

This brings us to what makes the fiscal hawks extend their talons: Portland, Pittsburgh, and Columbus don't have 245,000 employees with nice benefit packages. And they're right that Bloomberg has to do something substantial here. This one, to me, is the most glaring example: City employees, with a small number of exceptions, contribute no co-payment to their

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREA RENAULT/GLOBE PHOTOS.



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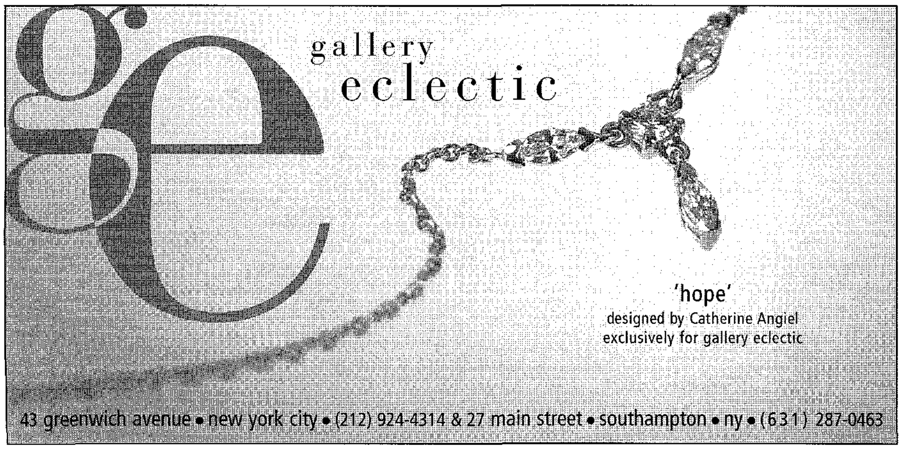

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medical plans. The same goes for almost 200,000 retirees, meaning that, throwing in their family members, New York City foots virtually all the medical bills of nearly a million New Yorkers. Who in the private sector this side of Jack Welch has that deal, especially in these times? Forcing employees to make modest contributions, says Charles Brecher of the Citizens Budget Commission, would reap more than $500 million a year.

A tougher challenge—and, in Cunningham's words, the "Holy Grail"—is the cost of Medicaid. The city will spend $4 billion next year on Medicaid. Bloomberg is going to push to have the state take over most of these costs. The state is busted, too, of course, but Bloomberg is looking to form an alliance with suburban and upstate counties, all of which have crippling Medicaid burdens. A governor surrounded by eight mayors and 45 or so county executives might not have much choice.

A heads-up: Medicaid might be the great Bloomberg-Pataki fight. If the mayor wins it and nothing else for the next three years, he will still have done a pretty amazing thing.

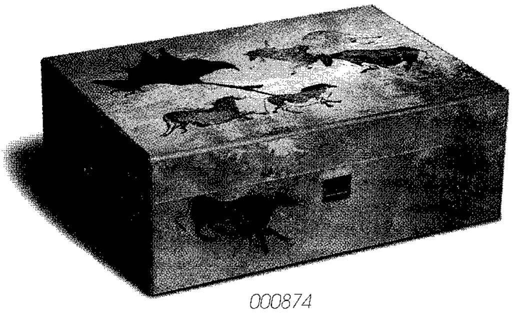
ON BOTH OF THOSE, UNION CONCESSIONS AND a Medicaid deal, he will have the support of editorial boards, watchdog groups, columnists, and various civic soothsayers. Getting them is possible. Neither will happen, though, if he doesn't stop acting like the city manager and start acting like the mayor. He's got one of America's great bully pulpits, and he refuses to use it. "Bloomberg may be doing the right things on the job, but he's not really explaining the job," says political consultant Philip Friedman. "Bush is explaining all the time what he's doing, whether he's actually doing it or not. And that's the difference between 65 and 41."

Right: He's out of focus right now; not commanding the stage. Another mayor might give a major address or two, even asking for television time, to lay out and explain his priorities and goals for a time of crisis, which this obviously is. Or at least have regular town-hall meetings out in the nabes. Bloomberg doesn't do that either. Even his refusal to perform weddings, reported in the *Daily News* recently, is emblematic: He's got a sense of the city as an amalgam of balance sheets and management reports, but not as the home of 8 million actual people.

That blank canvas that Mike Bloomberg was eleven months ago is being filled in, fast, by people who aren't painting a very flattering portrait. Time he started filling it in himself. ■

E-mail: tomasky@aol.com. Michael Tomasky's columns can be read online at nymetro.com/archive/tomasky.

Gifts for the "Good Life."



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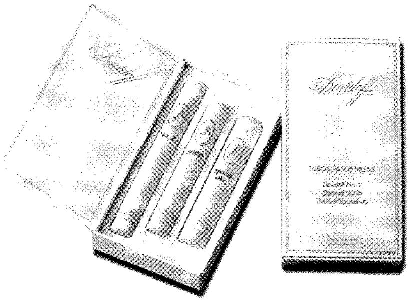

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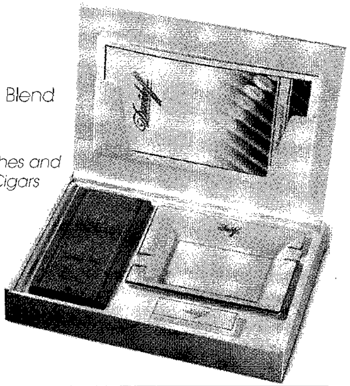

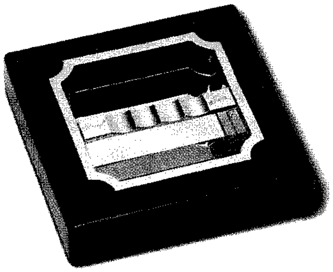

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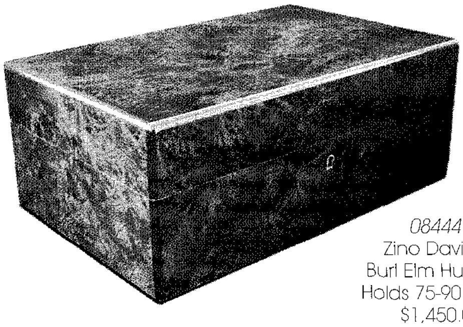

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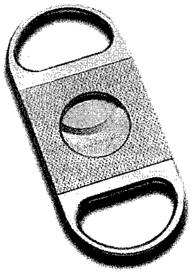

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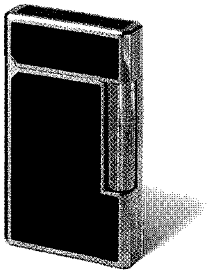

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Simon Dumenco THE CULTURE BUSINESS

I Want My DTV!

The city's in the midst of a technology-driven TV revolution, thanks to the irresistible pleasures of digital cable, video-on-demand, and TiVo. Only problem: You may never see your friends again.

ON A RECENT *LATE NIGHT WITH CONAN O'Brien*, guest Andy Richter (Conan's sorely missed sidekick) deadpanned his way through a gay spoof of *The Bachelor*, in which Andy had to choose between two of the show's schlumpy band members.

"You guys seem very happy," Conan prompted, after Andy revealed his *amore*.

"He's got TiVo," Andy said, shrugging, as if that made the choice a no-brainer.

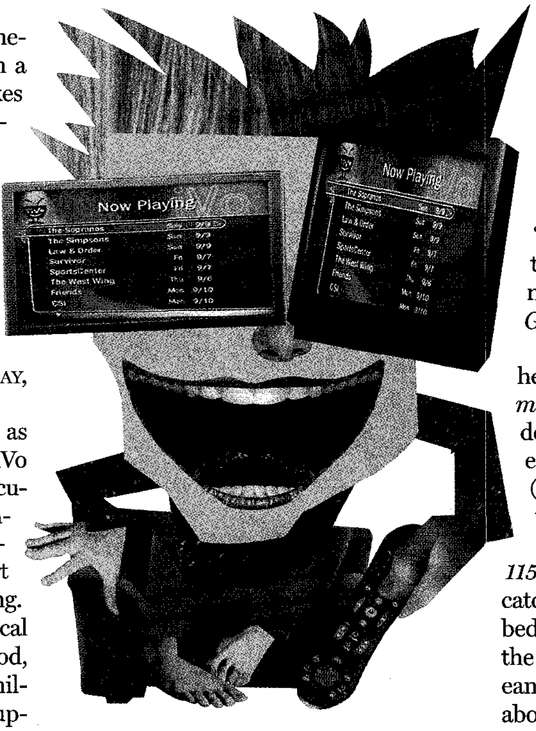
TiVo—the magic box that lets you "time-shift" TV shows (i.e., record them with a level of ease and automation that makes VCRs instantly obsolete) and that auto-records shows it thinks you'll like—is the consumer-technology cult item du jour. At the expense of its competition, ReplayTV, it's become the generic term for the entire digital-video-recorder category ("I TiVoed it") and even the subject of an extended comedic riff in *The Wall Street Journal* titled IF TIVO THINKS YOU ARE GAY, HERE'S HOW TO SET IT STRAIGHT.

But the truth is, TiVo's only as good as what you feed it. And all the focus on TiVo has obscured a larger cultural shift, particularly in New York City: With its 250 channels, digital cable (DTV), often in conjunction with TiVo, is spurring a new sort of highbrow, socially acceptable cocooning.

In New York, we've now got DTV critical mass. It's available in every neighborhood, and already half of Time Warner's 1.3 million metro-area cable customers have upgraded—despite the hassle of getting a new box installed and paying a minimum $9.95 premium over standard cable.

Suddenly it's okay to admit to watching more than just *The Simpsons* or *The Sopranos*. You get digital cable and you're an instant TV connoisseur: While the sap next door is watching *Everybody Loves Raymond*, you're delighting to *Behind the Music That Sucks* on MuchMusic USA (the wry stateside spinoff of the Canadian music-video channel) or catching a lucid dispatch from a Middle East BBC correspondent who isn't reflexively cheerleading regime change.

DTV's compelling enough on its own. But combine digital cable with TiVo and the nascent miracle of something called video-on-demand, and, well . . . it's quite possible half the city might never leave home again.



I FIRST STARTED NOTICING NEW YORK'S NEW TV culture when my TV broke. One day this fall, my nine-year-old twenty-inch Panasonic went permanently dark; the traumatic prospect of buying a replacement (shopper's paralysis) kept my apartment TV-free for almost three months.

I was abruptly roused to a new reality: I'd been losing my friends, without even having noticed it, to digital cable and TiVo. Nobody wanted to go out anymore. Rory? Home watching a documentary on Showtime Women. Seth? Riveted by a twenty-year-old basketball game on NBA TV. Dan? Watching a movie he missed at the Angelika on the Sundance Channel.

Some of my friends TiVo programs of their own choosing. Others take TiVo's recommendations. But most of my friends, actually, are still TiVo-less (this is very much an early-adopter phenomenon, with only 510,000 subscribers nationwide), and so they just flip on their DTV and find something to watch.

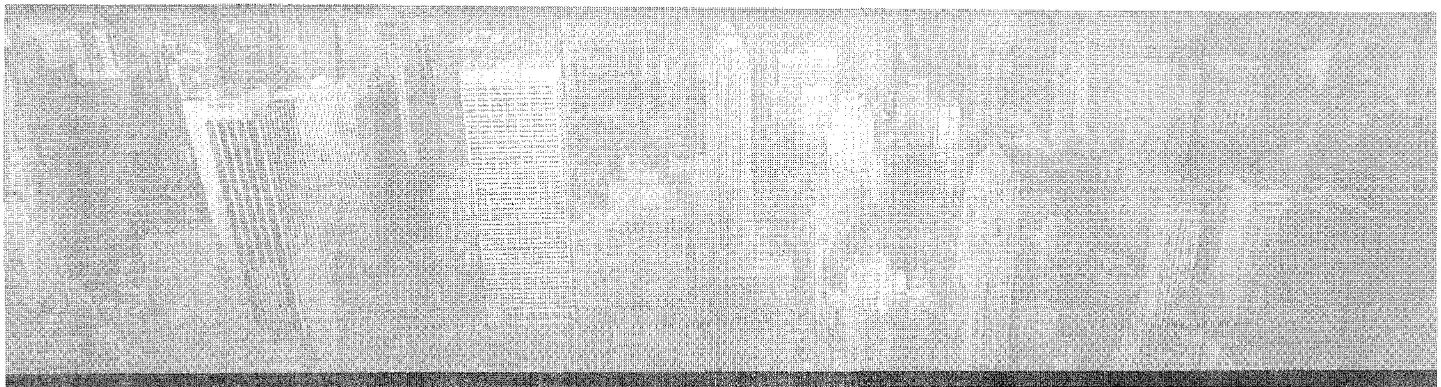
"I remember that when I first moved to New York," Rory says, "no one copped to watching TV. It was like, 'Morgan Entrekin this, Gary Fisketjon that.' And now it's like, 'Books? You mean those things that look like *TV Guide*, only heavier?' "

It could be that, as New Yorkers with heightened ironic sensibilities, we're even *more* susceptible to the lowbrow splendors of the digital-cable gigaplex than average, less irony-equipped Americans (now, *that's* ironic!). "These days, it's not unusual for me," Rory continues, "to answer the phone to a frantic '*Channel 115! Now!*' from a friend who wants me to catch a moment of a mother on her motel bed, eating buffalo wings, bitching about the unfair judging in a kiddie beauty pageant. So many fascinating documentaries about the most mundane stuff!"

But digital TV doesn't even need to be high-concept to seduce: "I'll watch any Celtics game from the eighties, when Bird and McHale and D.J. were all playing," Seth confesses. "A while ago, they replayed an entire playoff game from 1988, which actually made me late for a dinner party."

IF THE NEW TV CULTURE IS, FOR MANY, ABOUT old TV culture—i.e., largely a retro experience—it's thanks to some futuristic technology that still seems like the stuff of sci-

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN KRONINGER.



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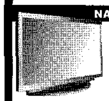

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SHARING IS CARING

ence fiction. I've been testing Time Warner Cable's digital-TV package, including its new video-on-demand feature, in tandem with a TiVo. And you know what? They're beautiful products—beautifully conceived, beautifully executed. (So far my TiVo doesn't seem to think I'm gay, but I'm pretty sure *it* is.) The boxes are sleek and the remote controls are minor triumphs of ergonomic design. But it's what's onscreen—particularly the interactive program guides that let you find out what's on any channel hours or *days* ahead—that makes DTV and TiVo so enthralling.

"How did any of us live without those guides?" my friend Kate asks. "I was at a dinner where a Ph.D. candidate in linguistics sheepishly admitted that he'll routinely spend an hour just playing with the program guide. It gives you *so much control*."

> "At a recent dinner, a Ph.D. candidate in linguistics sheepishly admitted that he'll routinely spend an hour just playing with the digital-TV program guide. **It gives you *so much control.*"**

But for those who fear the cracklike addictiveness of DTV, TiVo can seem like a lifeline. The Season Pass function, which lets you record an entire season of, say, *Curb Your Enthusiasm,* in one fell swoop is well known, but I've been having the most fun with the WishList feature. It basically lets you Google your TV. For instance, I've got a soft spot for the endearingly idiotic Canadian pop-punk band Sum 41. By WishListing the band's name using my remote, I got TiVo to track down three Sum 41 specials that I never would have found out about otherwise.

Everyone who has TiVo told me that "it will change your life," and so far it has. Then again, every new tech toy does—for a while. So I ask Steve, the person I know who's had TiVo the longest, what he thinks of it. "I recently visited my parents," he tells me, "and I nearly became insane. *Who are these people? Who could live like this?* We watched football without replay in slo-mo, and it was like being in a dark, dark age."

THE REALITY IS THAT, BECAUSE THEY'RE STILL (relatively) pricey cult products ($200 to $400 for the box, with a monthly $12.95 service fee), TiVos are not about to blanket the land like DTV. TiVo Inc. itself predicts that it will only hit the 1 million subscriber mark by the end of 2004.

In fact, if television is on the verge of a new, technology-driven golden age, much of it will be thanks to TiVo-like functions that are rolling out on digital cable right now. On Channel 1000 on Time Warner Cable, DTV subscribers can choose from more than 100 recently released movies, "rent" them for $3.95 for a 24-hour period, and pause, rewind, and fast-forward them. (If you own Blockbuster stock, you're going to sell it as soon as you discover Channel 1000.)

But the real thrill, according to Rebecca Glashow of In Demand—the New York company that provides video-on-demand (VOD) services and programming to cable operators across the country—is going to come in the next month or so, when "Free on Demand" is phased in on Time Warner. "New Yorkers will soon have dozens of video-on-demand options," she says, including music videos and watch-'em-whenever-you-want shows from BBC America. Anybody who has Time Warner digital cable will automatically get this free VOD programming. (Cablevision customers in Long Island and parts of Westchester who get iO—Interactive Optimum—service already have their own version of VOD.)

Still, the cable-industry pros I talked to don't think the rise of VOD means the demise of TiVo. Glashow, for instance, foresees the cable box becoming a hybrid device that licenses TiVo technology (DirecTV already offers a $199 combination satellite receiver–TiVo box). VOD involves vast banks of costly computer servers, so over time only the most popular programming will likely rate hard-drive space at cable headquarters. Viewers will have to record more specialized stuff (like my Sum 41 shows) on their local (i.e., TiVo) hard drives.

At any rate, "VOD is already insane," says Glashow, "and it's just going to get better."

Of course, for TV-addled New Yorkers—and the friends who miss them—there's another way to look at it: It's only going to get worse. ■

Additional research by Byrd Schas.
E-mail: sd17@aol.com

TV UNTANGLED

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WOMEN

downtowngirl

Looking for: a man

Age: 33

Occupation: ...a capitalist, w/artistic sensibilities...

The five items I can't live without: Strong coffee, laughter, water, the Sunday *Times*, NPR (ok, I'm a news junkie), and sunlight. Lots of it.

magicgenie

Looking for: a man

Age: 34

Best (or worst) lie I've ever told: What a cute baby!

If I could be anywhere at the moment: I would be out in the sun wearing my Brazilian bikini on a boat above an amazing dive spot.

MEN

bradeeeeeeeeeee

Looking for: a woman

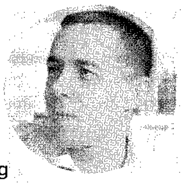
Age: 29

Most humbling moment: I remember being about 6 and having to pee real bad and I was riding my bike and my shoe lace got wrap'd around the pedal and just couldn't make it to the bathroom in time.

euboy

Looking for: a woman

Age: 30



Best (or worst) lie I've ever told: Cannes Film Festival 1999—pretending to be a famous Hollywood filmmaker (we actually managed to get into a very cool party at Jimmy's in Monte Carlo).

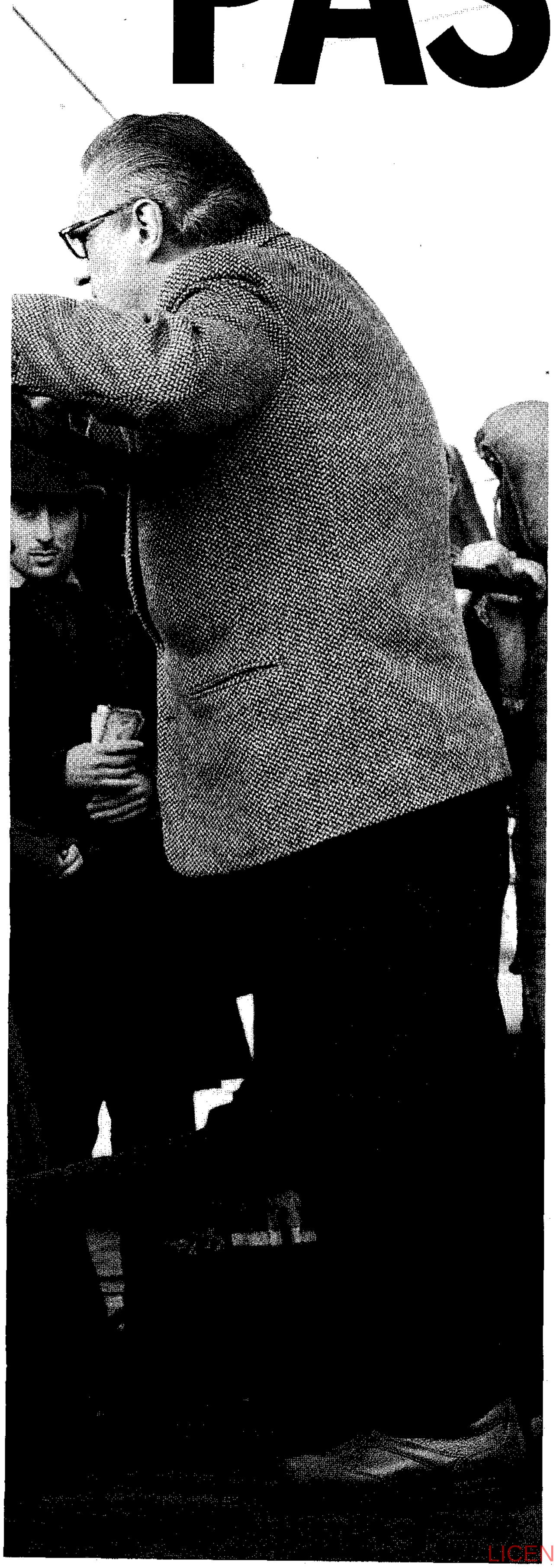
ONLINE ON AIR ON PAGE 108

NEW YORK MAGAZINE

RING LEADER

Martin Scorsese directs a prizefight on the same lot where another revered auteur, Fellini, made *La Dolce Vita*. Nowadays, even the biggest heavyweights in Hollywood consider it an honor to work under “Professor” Scorsese.

PASSION PLAY



After a career of telling tightly narrated urban fables, Martin Scorsese has let loose the monster epic he's been itching to do for 30 years. Equal parts costume drama, medieval morality play, sweeping romance, and New York creation myth, it feels like the movie he was born to make.

BY ALEX WILLIAMS

YOU MIGHT SAY THAT THE BIGGEST LESSON MARTIN SCORSESE learned about selling his electrifying, sometimes harrowing *Gangs of New York* to the mass market happened before he ever got a green light for it. • In the mid-nineties, Hollywood's most venerated, auteurish director wrangled $50 million to make a different epic of the streets, *Casino*—sort of a *Gangs of Las Vegas*, glittery and sun-drenched. The film went over schedule and over budget, as Scorsese, as usual, displayed the passion of Saint Jude—the patron saint of desperate causes—in trying to chase down the movie he saw in his mind. But for a preview audience at the Beekman Theater, things came to a head early on—specifically, a crunching, eyeball-popping prosthetic head in the infamous scene in which Joe Pesci interrogates a particularly stubborn mobster by crushing his head in a vise. "The audience started to get up and

PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRIGITTE LACOMBE

DIRTY MOVIE: Leonardo DiCaprio and Cameron Diaz flaunt period grime. The tenement-bred Scorsese seems wistful about the squalor of a slum that shocked even Charles Dickens.

leave!" groans Scorsese, sheepishly recalling the experience from the gilded elegance of his midtown townhouse. "I said, 'Oh, my God, we're not even halfway through the film!' "

This time around, Scorsese had no intention of producing that sort of reaction. On December 20, *Gangs of New York*, the movie Scorsese burned to make for 30 years, opens at long last. The film is not quite the bloodbath that many in Hollywood had come to expect. But at a James Cameron–scale budget of $100 million (twice the cost of any previous Scorsese movie), *Gangs* still raises a big question: Will a James Cameron–size audience want to sit still for an unflinching, weighty, and wildly ambitious three-hour epic from New York's high priest of urban dystopia? "I don't know," Scorsese says with a shrug. "When I'm making a film, *I'm* the audience."

Nevertheless, Scorsese did what he could this time to craft a crowd-pleaser. He cast Leonardo DiCaprio in his first monster picture since *Titanic*, and Daniel Day-Lewis in his much-anticipated return from five years of self-imposed exile, during which he worked for a time as an apprentice cobbler in Italy. Scorsese labored to produce at once a sumptuous costume drama, a sweeping romance, and a taut revenge tale. What he ended up with was, well, a Scorsese movie—tense, gritty, spontaneously brutal, and, when you least expect it, ecstatic. Imagine *Gone With the Wind* as narrated by Travis Bickle. But maybe that's appropriate. Over the past fifteen months, the world has started to *feel* like a Scorsese movie.

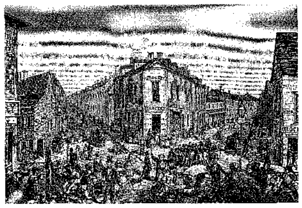
"WHEN I FIRST MET MARTY IN 1972, HE TOLD me that there were two books he wanted to make, *Gangs of New York* and *The Last Temptation of Christ*," recalls Paul Schrader, who has written four Scorsese movies, including *Taxi Driver*. "It struck me that these were rather grandiose ambitions for someone whose most important credit was a Roger Corman film. But I've never seen Martin Scorsese intimidated by an audacious suggestion. It's the opposite—it perks him to life like the Energizer Bunny."

While *Gangs* is Scorsese's most audacious movie, it's among his most personal, too. The film takes place during the years leading up to the Civil War in the infamous

THE LOW LIGHTS

By Jada Yuan

New York's first street gangs date to the 1790s, when young apprentices organized themselves by trade and spent their off-hours terrorizing pedestrians. Since then, it's been all downhill.

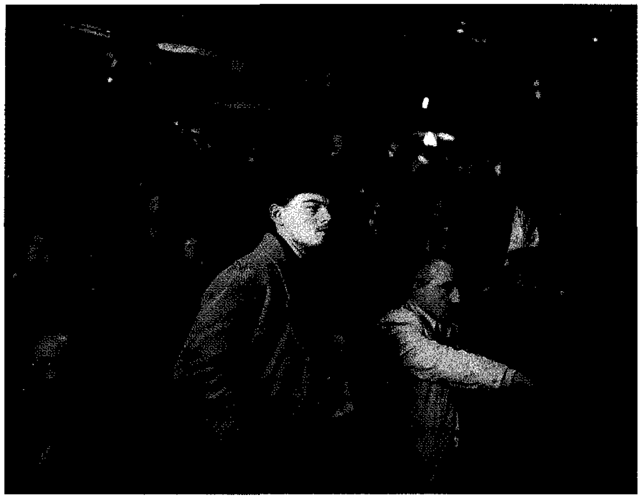


1825 In Five Points, **Rosanna Peers** opens the city's first greengrocery speakeasy, where she underprices local saloons. The **Forty Thieves**, the first gang with a definite, acknowledged leadership in New York, use the back room as their headquarters. They run a school, Forty Little Thieves, to train young pickpockets and murderers.

1830 The **Dead Rabbits** are formed after breaking off from the **Roach Guards**. (Like the future Crips and Bloods, the Dead Rabbits wore red stripes on their pantaloons, and the Roach Guards wore blue.) Their battle standard is a rabbit impaled on a pike, but the name comes from the Gaelic *dod ráibéid* (a violent, angry hulk). They become the sworn enemies of the **Bowery Boys**.

TIMELINE: PHOTOGRAPHS BY CULVER PICTURES (4).

downtown slum known as the Five Points, home to flamboyant Irish gangs like the Plug Uglies and the Dead Rabbits. The Points once lay only blocks from the Elizabeth Street tenement where Scorsese grew up (by that time, the neighborhood had been razed to build a federal courthouse). “My father had this mythological sense of the old New York, and he used to tell me stories about these old gangs, particularly the Forty Thieves in the Fourth Ward,” Scorsese recalls. “They still took the name in the 1930s, even though the neighborhood had become Italian by then.”



ROMAN LEGIONS: Scorsese, here filming a brawl scene between DiCaprio and Daniel Day-Lewis, went to great pains to find Italian extras who were fair-skinned enough to pass as Irish immigrants in nineteenth-century New York.

In the film, there is no shortage of archetypes familiar from Scorsese’s youth. Bill “the Butcher” Cutting (based on an actual historical figure, played by Day-Lewis) rails against immigrants as a nativist crusader, but he’s basically a mob boss wrapped in the Stars and Stripes. Amsterdam Vallon (DiCaprio) is a street kid both seduced by Bill’s power and bound by honor to avenge Bill’s killing of his father. DiCaprio’s love interest, Jenny Everdeane (Cameron Diaz), is a cunning pickpocket trying to steal a better life beyond the old neighborhood.

In *Gangs*, as in the Little Italy of Scorsese’s formative years, a distinctive urban dread wafts through even the moments of color and joy. Life is something that’s lived out with a time bomb audibly ticking. “Where I grew up, half a block away was the Bowery. These poor men were out of their minds, and *anything* could happen, at *any* second,” Scorsese says. “All my life, I never really felt comfortable anywhere in New York, except maybe in an apartment somewhere.” In this movie, the bomb ends up going off—and in Technicolor fashion. As Amsterdam and Bill finally square off, the city erupts into the apocalyptic Draft Riots of 1863—“the worst riots in American history, not New York history,” Scorsese says. “The worst loss of life until September 11.”

From the outset, *Gangs* feels like the New York movie Scorsese’s been building up to for his entire career—or maybe several of them. “My problem is, there’s no definitive story about New York for me,” Scorsese says. “I could take that book, I could make another ten films out of it. Maybe more. There’s one to be made on the Chinese in New York in the 1890s alone.”

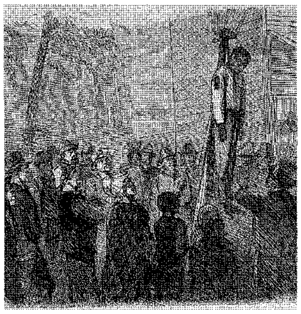
THE ODYSSEY BEGAN ON JANUARY 1, 1970, when Scorsese, staying at a friend’s house, ran across a copy of *The Gangs of New York*, Herbert Asbury’s 1928 history of Five Points. Scorsese immediately called a friend, screenwriter Jay Cocks. “Marty said, ‘Think of it like a Western in outer space,’ ” Cocks recalls with a laugh. It was all very “seventies.” There was lots of talk about *A Clockwork Orange*, and writing the lead for Malcolm McDowell. They would frame the narrative with Springsteen quotes, but otherwise keep the period slang bafflingly authentic. All of which is why *Gangs* never made it out of the seventies.

“Jay and I put together the first draft in 1977,” Scorsese recalls. “Next thing I knew, I was directing *Raging Bull*. That film was similar to this one, a kamikaze film—I put everything I knew into it, and if it was going to sink, it was going to sink, and I didn’t care.” Ten days after *Raging Bull* opened in 1980, *Heaven’s Gate*—the quintessential megaflop—was released by the same studio, United Artists. “The era of big-budget personal filmmaking was over,” Scorsese says ruefully. “I was going to move on to other things—go to Italy and make documentaries. I didn’t think there was any place for me in Hollywood anymore.”

Scorsese stayed, only to grow more mythic in the eyes of confirmed cineasts, but his unsettling tone poems like *After Hours* and *King of Comedy* ran aggressively counter to Hollywood’s blockbuster sensibility during the *Top Gun* eighties. From the outside, he appeared to have cashed his last “indulge the genius” coupon to make *The Last Temptation of Christ*, a picture that seemed to attract as many picketers as viewers. Even after *GoodFellas* and *Cape Fear* revived his commercial credibility in the early nineties, studios were wary of letting Scorsese be too Scorsese. “People always point to *Heaven’s Gate*, or my *New York, New York*—all these other pictures that went way over budget,” he confides. “I think that’s always been a problem for me.”

Then, on location for 1993’s *The Age of Innocence* in Troy, New York, Scorsese ran across an 1896 photo of a burned-out building, hauntingly dripping with icicles. He turned to his production designer, Dante Ferretti, and announced firmly, “I want this to be the first image in my next movie, *Gangs of New York*.” What Scorsese got financing for was *Casino*. Next, it was *Kundun*. After each film, Ferretti says, Scorsese would insist that *Gangs* was next. “Finally, I asked him, ‘Are we *ever* going to make this picture?’ ” Ferretti recalls. Scorsese, for his part, was pitching the project relentlessly. It’s just that no studio had the guts to take it on. Only when Mike Ovitz visited Scorsese on the Hell’s Kitchen set of *Bringing Out the Dead* in 1998 and offered up Leonar-

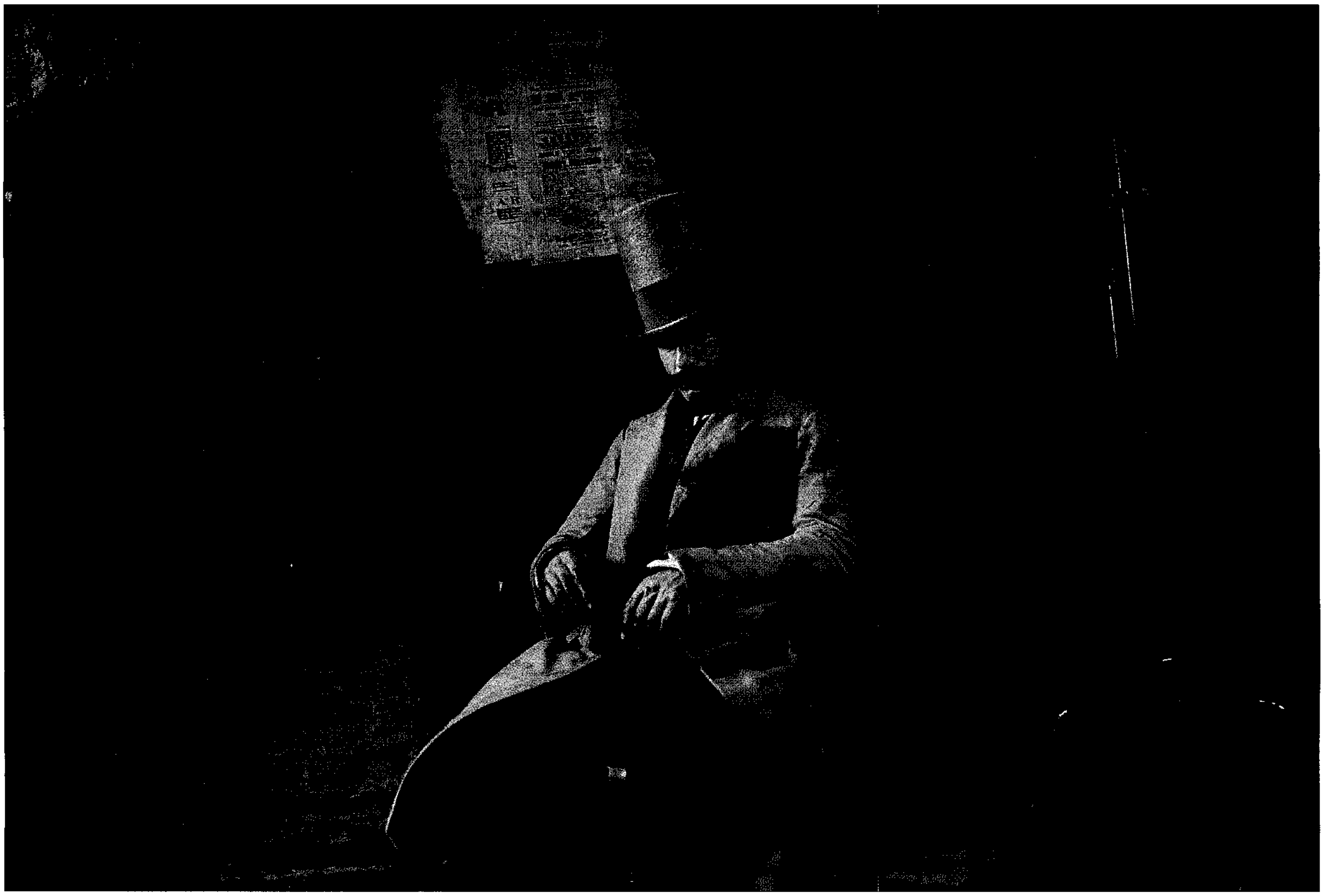
1834 The **Native Americans**, a political club fighting for the repeal of naturalization laws that give Irish the vote, join the Whigs in a three-day riot against **Tammany Hall**, which routinely employs street gangs to bully voters.



JULY 11, 1863 The **Civil War draft** begins; the next day, crowds mass outside city draft offices, protesting the Conscription Act, which allows the rich to buy their way out of the war for $300. The mob swells to tens of thousands, police officers are beaten, homes are torched, and freed slaves are lynched. Fighting is finally quelled four days later by Union troops.

1883 Piker Ryan, member of the **Whyos**, is arrested with a book listing various “jobs”: “Ear chawed off” ($15), “Doing the big job” ($100 and up). Rivals like the **Molasses Gang**, famous for tricking shopkeepers into filling a hat with molasses and then pulling it over their heads and robbing them, just can’t compete with such brutality.

AUGUST 1903 The **Five Pointers**, led by the indomitably fashionable Paul Kelly, crash a card game sponsored by **Monk Eastman**—leader of the largest Jewish gang in town—sparking New York’s biggest gun battle yet under the Second Avenue el. Hundreds of gangsters join, including the **Gophers** from Hell’s Kitchen, who shoot indiscriminately at both sides▶



BLOOD ON THE SLACKS: The intense Day-Lewis—no stranger to the Method—freaked out many as he *became* Bill the Butcher; he looked to gangsta rap to inspire his gangster fury.

do DiCaprio—the centerpiece client of his new, and ill-fated, company, Artists Management Group—did *Gangs* finally look bankable. Not surprisingly, it was Miramax that took the dare.

"I've wanted to work with Marty in any capacity I can for years, and he'd always been tied up with someone or something else," explains Miramax chief Harvey Weinstein, who considers himself a friend as well as a fan. "The minute there was an opening, I jumped in with both feet."

Still, Harvey-versus-Marty had Ali-Foreman written all over it. The personal styles of these heavyweights of New York film couldn't have been more different. The hulking Harvey is a bombastic Barnum, a bellower, an intimidator. "Harvey's a *showman,*" Scorsese says diplomatically. The diminutive Marty, meanwhile, is neurotic, cerebral, logorrheic—and just as intimidating. "Marty and I had a *very* similar vision," Weinstein says sardonically. "We had Marty's vision."

From the outset, Scorsese made no secret of his ambitions. Early on, he handed cinematographer Michael Ballhaus a lavish book of Rembrandt prints and told him this was how the film should look. "He loved the use of light and shadows," Ballhaus explains. A former instructor at NYU, Scorsese even foisted a syllabus on Weinstein. "Marty made me watch 80 movies to prepare for the movie," says Weinstein. "*Eighty.* Can you imagine? How about *The Man Who Laughs* with Conrad Veidt, a 1928 silent movie with the worst organ music you've ever heard? And remember: No videos, no DVDs. Every movie has to be on the big screen. It was like going to school with Professor Scorsese."

Defying Hollywood's drift toward computer graphics, Miramax agreed to build a spectacular re-creation of the Five Points, designed by Ferretti, at the famed Cinecittà studios in Rome. The atmosphere on the set proved nearly as volatile as in the old ghetto itself. Day-Lewis didn't simply play the homicidal Bill the Butcher but became him. If he called his agent back in New York, he spoke to the secretary as Bill. He practiced tapping his eyeball—covered in prosthetic glass, to simulate Bill's fake eye—with the tip of a sharp knife to learn

CHINESE THEATRE
SEATS RESERVED FOR AMERICANS

1909 Much like the Astor Place riots of 1849—when Irish Five Points gangs protested the appearance of an English actor on their turf—the most bloody tong war in Chinatown history begins when the **Hip Sings** kill an **On Leong** comedian for being disrespectful. The "Bloody Angle" on Doyers Street near the Chinese Theater becomes notorious for murderous ambushes.

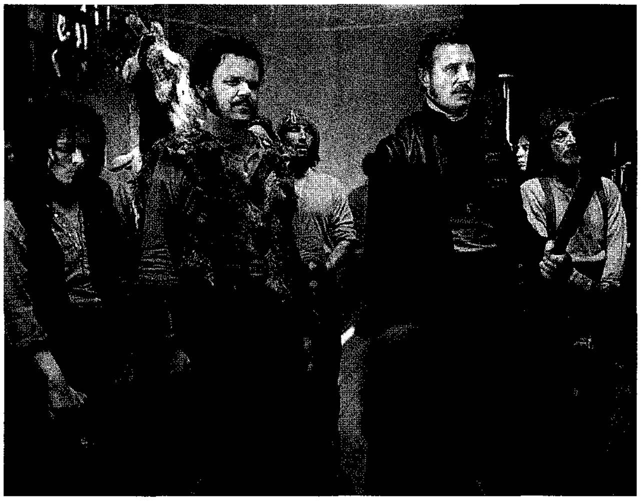
1910s Street gangs are increasingly seen as farm teams for the burgeoning Cosa Nostra. **Legs Diamond** is a member of the **Hudson Dusters**, famously fond of cocaine. Frank Costello runs with the **Gophers**. "Terrible" Johnny Torrio, Lucky Luciano, and a fresh-faced Al Capone are **Five Pointers.**

February 8, 1932 At age 23, Hell's Kitchen's **Vincent "Mad Dog" Coll** is shot dead in a phone booth after waging a vigilante war against the booze-running businesses of **Dutch Schultz** and **Owney "the Killer" Madden,** who had resurrected the **Gophers** during Prohibition. Coll was rumored to be on the phone with Madden when he was shot.

TIMELINE: PHOTOGRAPHS, LEFT TO RIGHT, BY BROWN BROS.; CULVER PICTURES; AP/WIDE WORLD; JEAN-PIERRE LAFFONT/CORBIS-SYGMA; KRT PHOTO.

to do it without blinking. Every morning, the idiosyncratic actor would pump iron in a gym under Scorsese's office, Eminem throbbing up through the floorboards. "He was filled with this extraordinary rage, and he just stayed that way for seven months," Scorsese says, sounding a bit envious.

Obsession became infectious. During the last week of shooting, Scorsese and Ballhaus were inside a tent peering at a live video feed from the set when they noticed, on the fringes, a fight breaking out. It was DiCaprio and "Bill" going at it, getting very Methody, clawing away at each other and rolling around in the dirt to the point of near-exhaustion, even though the cameras weren't yet rolling. "You remember that kid in *This Boy's Life?* He's not like that anymore," Day-Lewis recalls with grudging admiration. "I'll tell you, I'm glad I had been working out."



MAD AX: The Dead Rabbits don post-apocalyptic garb—and medieval weaponry—to battle the Nativists in Paradise Square. Scorsese's vision of yesteryear New York was hyperauthentic, but also otherworldly—"Science fiction in reverse," he jokes.

The scale of the project required the usually reserved Scorsese to play the "general," Day-Lewis says, so there Scorsese was, whirring around the twisting streets among hundreds of Italian extras in a golf cart, as if it were Patton's white steed. He would park long enough to explain to the costume people precisely how much dirt to grind into each garment. "There was one rack for lower-class characters, one rack for middle-class," says Thelma Schoonmaker, Scorsese's longtime editor. "Marty's very meticulous."

Weinstein, meanwhile, had concerns of his own. Lots of them. Why cast two of Hollywood's premier heartthrobs then cover them in grime? What's with that bizarre stovepipe hat on Daniel? What about his garish plaid trousers? Miramax sent around ceaseless memos detailing Weinstein's concerns—"It was *constant*," Scorsese moans—but they couldn't have fallen on deafer ears. "There was one that said there was 'too much oil in the hair,'" Day-Lewis says with a chuckle. "So I said, 'Great, let's put some more oil in.' When I bumped into Harvey on the stairs at Cinecittà, I said, 'Harvey, I got the message about you wanting more oil in my hair. Is it okay now?'"

For one scene, Scorsese insisted on a historically accurate Rat Pit, in which a single terrier fought against dozens of sewer rats while onlookers placed bets. For another, Scorsese demanded a jar of human ears on the bar of Bill's brothel headquarters, Satan's Circus. "Harvey didn't want the rats. He didn't want the ears," Scorsese says with a dismissive wave. "I mean, you give an ear, you get a drink. That's the way it was. You don't have to *dwell* on it."

Weinstein, however, thinks too much has been made of the give-and-take. "There *was* no give-and-take," he says with a wheezy chuckle. "All the things I asked Marty not to do, he did, and you know what? I'm totally fine with all of it. Make no mistake, this is Marty's movie, top to bottom—completely uncompromising. And I didn't ask for compromise."

As the budget ballooned beyond its original $84 million to $100 million, however, Miramax began to assert more influence. "I was there for the last week of shooting. The pressure on Marty was extraordinarily intense," Cocks says. "He was shooting the final confrontation between Daniel and Leo, and they actually made him stop before he got all the shots. They said, 'That's it, that's it!' It's like you're running the vacuum cleaner and they pull the plug out. So Marty actually had to go back when the movie was already put together and get a few more shots in New York because he didn't have enough coverage."

"We went over a few dollars, and so what?" Weinstein says now. "I made this movie for Marty. I *served* him. That's what I did as producer on this film. For Marty, hopefully, it will be vindication at the end of a long, hard, 27-year road." For his part, Weinstein's great "gamble" is already looking more and more like a sure thing. He sold off the foreign rights alone—to British television producer Graham King—for $65 million.

Still, given the potent brew of personalities, it was natural that rumors would flourish, and they did. There was chatter, apparently baseless, that Leo's weight was ballooning on Roman pasta, or that he was on a star trip and clashing with Scorsese. "All bullshit," Ballhaus says wearily. But then Miramax started to push back the release date—Weinstein originally pushed for a Christmas 2001 release but determined that the film was too brutal for the raw nerves of the country after 9/11. To judge from the press, the movie was starting to look less like the film *Titanic* (to summon that other pricey DiCaprio historical epic once presumed to be folly) than like the actual *Titanic*. It seemed almost impossible that this behemoth would ever stay afloat.

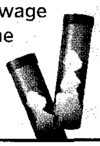
"The film has taken on an aura of mystery. There's been so much hogwash written about it," Day-Lewis says. "But that's provided a kind of smokescreen under which Martin has just quietly got on with making the film he wanted to make in the first place."

August 29, 1959 Puerto Rican thugs from the **Vampires, Young Lords,** and **Heart Kings** beset a group of white kids in a Hell's Kitchen playground, killing two. Vampire Salvador Agron, nicknamed **"the Capeman"** because of his red-lined black cape, is given the death penalty, later commuted. He returns to midtown in 1998 to murder Paul Simon's career.

1968 Twenty-one-year-old **Mickey Featherstone,** a Hell's Kitchen hoodlum, returns from Vietnam a murderous paranoid-schizophrenic. The next year, he borrows a gun from **Jimmy Coonan,** an up-and-coming gang leader, and shoots a drunken Southerner at the Leprechaun Bar. The two become fast friends and go on to form the **Westies.**

1972 South Bronx adolescent gangs the **Savage Skulls** and the **Savage Nomads** attack a group of junkies, killing two, claiming they are "protecting" the neighborhood. But as the decade progresses (68,456 fires are reported from 1970 to 1975), there is less and less to protect.

1989 The rise of crack has led street gangs to new levels of violence and profitability. In other news, the Bloody Angle of Doyers Street again becomes the most dangerous block in the city, as the Chinese **Flying Dragons** wage turf wars with the Vietnamese **BTKs** (Born to Kill).



1996 The **United Blood Nation** (or "the Bloods"), which formed three years earlier in Rikers as an African-American protection gang against the **Latin Kings** and the **Ñetas,** sends emissaries to eight New York City neighborhoods on a recruiting drive. A wave of subway slashings, carried out with with razors and box cutters, turns out to be their initiation ritual.

PERFECT FIT: It was only when Scorsese's longtime champion Mike Ovitz served up the hunky DiCaprio for the role of Amsterdam that Scorsese secured the built-in box office needed to make his unmakable picture.

AS THE WIND HURLS RAINDROPS VIOLENTLY against the tall windows at the rear of his townhouse, the director looks oddly serene, warmed by the room's golden glow as he sips coffee from a china cup beneath a gigantic thirties poster for Renoir's *Grand Illusion*. There's some reason, at last, for serenity, and it's not just tonight's safety from a storm: The behemoth, to say the least, floats. *Gangs* is without question spectacular—possibly great.

Regardless, the conversation can't quite seem to remain buoyant. It's a nasty world, Scorsese agrees—a world of too much passion and too little sense, of ancient blood feuds and perilous clannishness. We're talking about the world of *Gangs* but also the world in general. "We're in it now. The whole world is in it," he says. "The whole world is New York now, New York in the nineteenth century. We're going to have to learn to smile and deal with everybody. In the meantime, there's going to be a lot of damage, and there's a war. It's a state of war that will probably go on for a couple hundred years."

For anyone else, it's a dreary thought. But as Scorsese talks, the eyebrows as coarse as boar bristles begin to dance behind his huge black-framed eyeglasses. That perverse titillation over looming disorder once made Scorsese seem unique. For most of his career, the violence of Scorsese's movies seemed excessive, phantasmagoric. Well, the world caught up. Scorsese, ironically, has moved on. In *Gangs*, it's the ever-present threat of violence, not actual gore, that frays the nerves. "In this movie, I wanted to create another world, one that's very primitive," he explains. "A lot of the violence is actually implied through editing, because ultimately, that world is violent in such a way that it's everyday violence. You become numb to it."

Scorsese sits quietly for a moment but seems unable to pull himself from the topic. "Some of my films are known for the depiction of violence," he says, choosing his words with precision. "I don't have anything to prove with that anymore. I don't feel the poetry of violence the way Peckinpah used to." Another pause. Scorsese can't quite abandon the matter. "You take *Casino*. There's the scene where Joe Pesci's character and his younger brother are killed by their closest friends with baseball bats in a cornfield. That way of life that we depicted, *that's* where it really ends—your closest friend smashing you in the head with a baseball bat. Not even a gun. Not cutting your throat." The eyebrows ominously begin to twitch once again. "You're going to get hit—*many* times—and you're still going to be breathing when they put the dirt on you. If you want to live in that lifestyle, *that's* where you're going to go."

Funny, but that sounds just a little like the "lifestyle" Scorsese himself has chosen: If you're bold enough to take on Hollywood, history, and Harvey Weinstein, you *will* get hit. They *will* throw the dirt on you. The point is, you *will* still be breathing in the end—which makes it only more ironic when Scorsese adds, with a weary smile, "If that isn't a deterrent, I don't *what* is." ■

GANG BUSTERS

So where are today's gangs of New York? Turns out they're on the verge of extinction.

BY GREG DONALDSON

Ride the 7 train, the "Orient Express," through Queens from Long Island City to Flushing, and you might as well be circumnavigating the globe. According to the 2000 census, 36 percent of all New Yorkers are foreign-born—up from 28.4 percent in 1990—and the epicenter of this immigration explosion is Queens, which is now the most ethnically diverse county in the country. Historically, such massive immigration, cramped living quarters, and poverty have always spawned street gangs, as young male newcomers banded together to fight more entrenched groups for turf and, of course, honor.

The fifties saw "rumbles"—pitched street battles between the switchblade gangs, immortalized by the fictional Puerto Rican Sharks and Anglo Jets of *West Side Story;* in the sixties, the black Jolly Stompers held sway in Brownsville, Brooklyn; and the mostly Latino Savage Nomads prowled the South Bronx in the early seventies. But what gangs are battling for turf now? Are Colombians jousting with Chinese and Koreans for control of the parks and playgrounds of Flushing?

By all accounts, the answer is no. "The gang situation in New York is under control," says Inspector William Tartaglia, head of the Gang Division of the New York City Police Department. According to Tartaglia, there are several thousand Latin Kings still spread throughout the five boroughs (they suffered a massive takedown in May 1998, when scores of Kings and Queens were put away for long stretches), along with a loose array of Bloods wannabes and a smattering of new ethnic gangs. But when it comes to large numbers, group loyalty, and active criminality, today's gangs of New York are limp and demoralized, if not completely clueless. "Sometimes," says Captain Charles Alifano, also of the Gang Division, "we pick up a kid who identifies himself as a Blood, and we have to tell him which pocket he's supposed to have his red handkerchief in."

The Bloods and Crips have been able to maintain L.A.'s status as the drive-by-shooting capital of the world, and the mega-street gangs of Chicago like the Gangster Disciples and Vice Lords continue to flourish. So where have all the New York gangs gone? Ric Curtis, an anthropology professor at John Jay College, suggests that urban renewal has helped speed the demise of the ethnic gang in New York: "So many neighborhoods were destroyed, there was nothing left to fight over." Curtis points out that *West Side Story* was about a battle over land that is now Lincoln Center. He also notes that this has been compounded by the fact that many new arrivals are too savvy to move into the notorious inner-city neighborhoods that have traditionally served as immigrant portals: "You simply couldn't sell the South Bronx to the Eastern Europeans."

Ethnographers like Curtis also speculate that the heroin epidemic of the seventies and the crack boom of the eighties actually weakened the ethnic street gangs. With the demand for drugs came corporate-style drug-selling organizations, and for young men in New York's poorest areas, the lure of fast money quickly replaced neighborhood fealty and gang affiliation. Members of the New York Bloods, modeled after but not affiliated with the West Coast version, have been known to change their gang affiliation when it suits them—an act unheard of on the West Coast. "They are just drug-dealing crews that try to capitalize on the name," explains an NYPD detective. Indeed, the gang, such as it is, cuts across ethnic lines. There are Latino Bloods, and even white Bloods, to be found in Staten Island.

Integration, apparently, isn't healthy for gang culture. The general trend toward diversity in popular culture, where white and Asian hip-hop fans do their best very best to imitate inner-city minorities, has further pushed the ethnic street gang toward obsolescence. Fifty years ago, Eminem might have led a white gang against black youth from across town. Now he's in heavy rotation on Hot 97.

But according to Tartaglia and other police experts, the real reason gangs are disappearing is the NYPD Gang Division. The division, 300 strong, gathers intelligence from local detective squads, precinct cops, and informants. When it picks up a rumor of a gang fight from school security or learns of an assault where a gang name was used, it saturates the area with uniformed officers and detectives. "You can't have a gang behind closed doors. You have to be in the streets, and that's where we put our people," Tartaglia says. "We show up and we keep coming back."

CHECKMATE: In the past five years, the once mighty Latin Kings have seen their numbers dwindle.

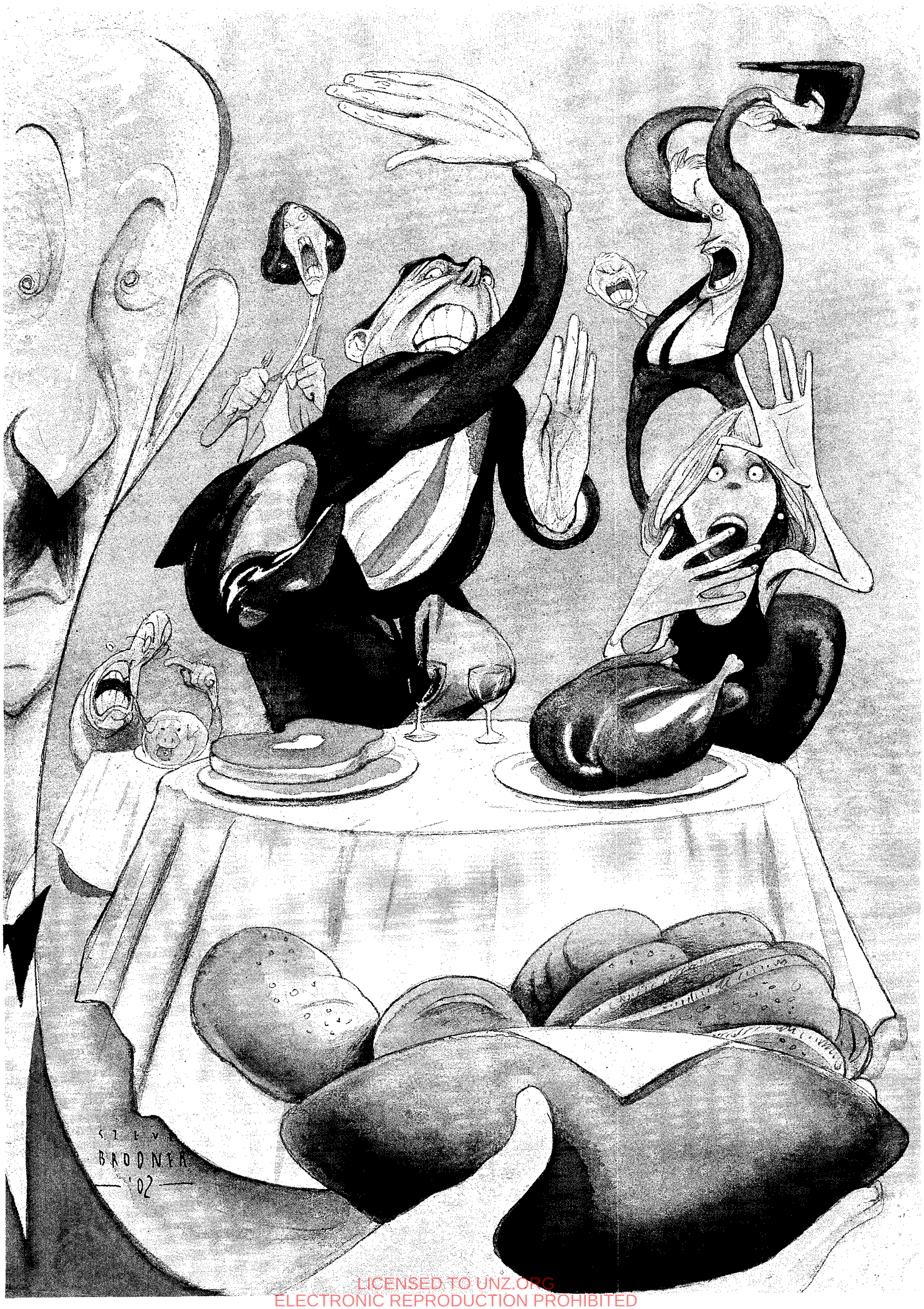
But while New York may be experiencing a lull in gang activity, that's no reason to get comfortable. "Unfortunately, gang affiliation is on the rise in our high schools," says Norbert Davidson of the Department of Education School Safety and Planning. Predictably, the activity parallels immigration patterns. A group that calls itself DDP—for Dominicans Don't Play—has carved out some territory in Washington Heights and the Bronx. Caribbean-immigrant youths, while not forming their own gangs, have been drawn into the Crips. (According to Davidson, a high-school youth may be wearing a Calvin Klein shirt to make a fashion statement. Or he might be sending another kind of message. "If a vertical line is drawn through the C, it means the student is a Blood, a 'Crip killer.' ") There is even a group of Yugoslavian, Albanian, and Pakistani boys who call themselves YAPS.

But as another indicator of New York's diminished status as a gang incubator, instead of starting in the mean streets of the city and spreading to the suburbs, as gangs like the Jolly Stompers did in the sixties, many of the new street gangs of New York City, like MS-13, which started among young Salvadoran construction workers and landscapers in Nassau and Suffolk counties, have traveled in the opposite direction. MS-13 members can now be found in Corona, Queens, and Parkchester in the Bronx. Their colors are blue and white—same as the Salvadoran flag. On Long Island, they are involved in a murderous feud with SWP—Salvadorans With Pride.

Some have estimated the number of Mexican gangs at 30, but both police and sociologists play down their significance, pointing out that the new gangs don't have nearly the numbers or the organization that the Latin Kings or even the Ñetas had five years ago. Instead of warring with rival ethnic groups, the Mexican gangs most often end up fighting with other Mexicans. "They'll invade a wedding or a baptism," explains Tartaglia. It's just like crashing a party, except sometimes the violence turns deadly. In August, 10-year-old Malenny Mendez was struck by a stray bullet allegedly fired by one of a group of ten Saint James Boys who had shown up uninvited at a baptism. According to police, the Saint James Boys named themselves after a park on Jerome Avenue in the Bronx and are an offshoot of an older West Side Manhattan gang known as Los Traveosos, "the Troublemakers."

In warm weather, small groups of Mexican gang members gather around the benches of Sunset Park to drink beer and gaze across the harbor at the Statue of Liberty and the Manhattan skyline. If recent trends hold, the gangbangers of the future will be organized around neither neighborhood nor the ethnicity they hold so dear. They don't know it, but these thugs may soon be as anachronistic as the Bowery Boys. ■

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW LICHTENSTEIN/CORBIS-SYGMA.


STEVE
BRODNER
'02

More and more New Yorkers are deserting their laborious low-fat regimens and gleefully dropping pounds while gorging on steak and bacon. What now strikes fear in their hearts: the bread basket. Welcome to a city in the throes of

CARB PANIC

■ BY ARIEL LEVY ■

IF YOU ARE STILL LIVING BY THE OLD-SCHOOL logic of low fat, any day now you will find yourself at breakfast, staring out past your plate of colorful fruit salad and earth-tone wheat toast at a sea of people—thin ones, seemingly reasonable ones—whose plates are heaped with sausage links, fried eggs, shiny bacon, and all the other foods you've been dutifully avoiding for as long as you can remember. And you will notice when you raise your bread to your mouth that it is *you* who are regarded as strange and reckless and bound for fatness. To your horror, you will discover that the stigma once connected to greasy fried meats has somehow leapt off the other people's plates and made its way onto yours. You will pinch yourself in hopes of waking up, but this is no nightmare: This is breakfast as usual in a city in the midst of a carb panic.

■ ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEVE BRODNER ■

"The moment the waiter comes to the table with bread, everyone is like *No!* before he can even put it on the plate," says socialite psychiatrist Samantha Boardman. "It's almost hostile to serve pasta these days because so many people are on Atkins." Boardman is herself so enamored of the aging, carb-hating Dr. Robert C. Atkins that she has considered leaving her Cornell medical-school residency to work for him. "I am a big follower of his," she says, "but you know who's even bigger is Alex Miller: She lost her baby weight in literally like one day! It's *so* socially acceptable to be on the diet."

"I just threw a cocktail party for fourteen people," says writer Winifred Gallagher, "and in the old days, I would have thought in terms of hors d'oeuvre like little quiches and other tiny fattening things that are delicious. People just don't eat those things anymore. I was at a big event recently with lots of traditional high-carb, delicious finger foods, and basically everyone just gravitated toward the shrimp. So for my party, I bought a whole lot of filet mignon and cut baguettes into fine slices with cheese. At the end of the party, there were pieces of baguette left over, but absolutely no filet."

Everywhere you go, it seems, someone—everyone—is passing on the bread, the pasta, the rice. "My mother lost about 60 pounds," says my friend Jordana Rosenberg. "We went out to Thai food and she ate this piece of searingly hot food—she was *crying* at the table—and everyone was screaming, *Eat rice! Eat rice!* She wouldn't do it. She refused to do it."

To the initiated, carbs are essentially imbued with evil powers. "My younger brother is always going on and off Atkins," laments Kim France, editor-in-chief of *Lucky* magazine. "He refers to Wheat Thins and bread as the white devil."

"People were doing Atkins even when they felt it was unhealthy, but now, out of the places I go for dinner often as a guest, probably three out of four never have carbohydrates anymore," says Joan Wallstein, a former assistant housing commissioner in her fifties. The turning point, she said, was a July 7 cover story in *The New York Times Magazine* titled "What If Fat Doesn't Make You Fat?," which argued that the long-embattled Atkins, the proponent of a diet that embraces protein and fat and eschews carbohydrates and sugar, may actually have had it right all along. That story promptly earned its author, Gary Taubes, a $700,000 book deal and set half of New York City throwing its baguettes out the window.

Plenty of people—baby-boomers, by and large—had been losing weight on Atkins for literally decades, but the going thinking was always that healthwise, Atkins was about one step above bulimia as a weight-loss strategy. Those who tried it, and got results, felt like they had made a Faustian pact. The minute the story came out, all those skinny beef-eaters seemed to jump out of the closet at once. Suddenly, being on Atkins wasn't some dirty secret, and bacon consumption became chic.

Of course, there has always been a group of New York women who are professionally thin and intake-obsessed (in fashion, society, publicity, etc.), but now regular people—middle-aged men!—can be found all over town discussing the effect of a baked potato on their thighs and moods.

"Atkins is very appealing to men because it's like *steak* as opposed to lettuce leaves, so Gore is on it and, I think, Paul Wolfowitz," says Emma Gilbey Keller, wife of *Times*-man Bill Keller. "I was going to join Weight Watchers—I found out where to go and everything—but my husband said he was going to do Atkins, so we decided to do it together. That story came out a week or two after I gave birth, and I was new to this world of being a big fat cow and having to wear flowing clothes. I've lost 32 pounds! Now I'm *evangelical* on the subject. I swear to God, I have so much energy, I'm never tired, and I just had a baby! Sadly, my baby got colic because I was eating so much dairy, so I had to go on soy, which was a real drag. Fortunately, she was okay.

"My younger brother is always going on and off Atkins," says Kim France. "He refers to Wheat Thins and bread as the WHITE DEVIL."

"Everyone I know is on it, and now we're much more concerned about sugar," Gilbey Keller continues in her buttery British accent, "because the whole problem with our country is that we Americans consume so much sugar! Are you on a weight-loss program?" she asks brightly.

I tell her that I am recovering from a rather fierce round of dysentery I contracted on a recent trip to Cambodia, so at the moment I'm not looking to lose any more weight.

"Oh," she exclaims, "lucky you!"

THE 30-PLUS-YEAR-OLD PROMISE of Atkins is that you can shed fat—lots of it—by eating it; that you can slim down while you enjoy bounty, abundance, pig-outs. Consider the description of the foods you can eat while you "do" Atkins in his latest book: "mounds of seeds and nuts, platters of fish, a lobster in drawn butter, well-seasoned fish, turkey and duck and certainly a juicy steak . . . fresh green salads drenched in healthy olive-oil-based dressing overflowing their bowls." But his Dionysian-feast scene goes dark and stormy when flour and sugar enter the picture. "The typical modern American diet—or, as I sometimes call it, the high-sugar horrors—makes you fat," he writes scarily. "Those foods are bad for your health, bad for your energy level, bad for your mental state, bad for your figure. Bad for your career prospects, bad for your sex life, bad for your digestion, bad for your blood chemistry, bad for your heart." Yikes. And it's not enough to simply give up pastry: Atkins claims that the body can't really tell the difference between simple (croissant) and complex (brown rice) carbohydrates, and that what really matters, weight-loss-wise, is a food's "glycemic load," or sugar content. Consequently, bananas are a major no-no.

Plenty of protein and fat (!) is the answer. "Your compulsions hold no terrors for me," he soothes, "and soon they won't for you. When you pass that refrigerator, open it, have some chicken salad or a slice of pot roast." And, perhaps, a nice side of Hollandaise sauce.

Nicholas Perricone, a dermatologist and former assistant professor at Yale, has made a career and garnered a celebrity following based on a reasonably similar high-protein diet—or "prescription," as he's fond of calling it—notable for its emphasis on salmon and its added promise of good skin: a "face-lift in your fridge." Like Atkins, whom Perricone called a "hero" when I spoke with him, Perricone's basic premise is that the consumption of the white devil causes a dramatic spike in insulin. This, in turn, causes inflammation (and hunger), which over time increases the risk of all sorts of bad things, like Alzheimer's, cancer, acne, and fatness.

Maria Verel started the Perricone diet not long after she landed her job as Diane Sawyer's makeup artist on *Good Morning America*. "I was getting up at 3:30 every morning, at work by 5, and then working usually a full day at another shoot. I was just working so many hours. I'm not a meat eater, so the only thing keeping me going was carbs. I'd grab a bagel or a sandwich, and I just be-

came more and more tired. I found myself in the ever-expanding world of carbohydrates," she says ominously. "I was very bloated and tired, and my brain felt really sluggish, the bags under my eyes were getting worse and worse—I couldn't figure out why."

I ask her if it might have had something to do with working fourteen-hour days that began at 3:30 in the morning. "I thought about that, but it was mostly about the bagels," says Verel.

"When you eat bread, you go into a sedated brain fog," she continues. "So I went cold turkey. I started snacking on nuts, on cheese. The main thing I learned from Dr. Perricone was, don't let your insulin spike, don't let your blood sugar drop. I love bread—I love, love, *love* it!—but it starts the carb roller coaster. I was just down South with the show, and I had a bowl of cheese grits. *They were awesome,*" she says with an almost frightening intensity. "They were amazing." She regains her composure. "But then I had to sleep for, like, the rest of the day."

Atkins and Perricone claim that everything would have been all right if we had just stuck to our caveman roots and restricted ourselves to fishing and hunting instead of evolving into agrarians and messing around with wheat. As if things weren't bad enough after we started harvesting grains in the Fertile Crescent, sometime in the early eighties we got it in our fool heads that we should eat less fat. "I have seen the ravages of the low-fat, no-fat diet craze, and they are alarming," Perricone warns, preacher-man-style, in his book. He goes on to describe a seemingly benign breakfast of juice, cereal with skim milk and banana slices, a bran muffin, and coffee, which, it turns out, "will store body fat more quickly than eating [a] candy bar! After you have eaten such a meal . . . you will not only be fat, wrinkled, and fatigued, you will also be in a bad mood."

I head to pick up some lunch. I find myself passing by the troughs of sandwiches and scones at the midtown Mangia with a sense of haste and hostility. I turn to the protein-only area, but the sliced, bleeding steaks, hunks of chicken breast in tarragon mayonnaise, and other bits of creamily adorned meat seem just as revolting as ever. I settle on soup. Unfortunately, it is tomato-Parmesan today: The Parmesan is suddenly no problem, what with its being fat and all, but tomatoes are actually pretty high in carbs, according to Atkins's handy carbohydrate-gram counter. Tomatoes are really insidious, red white-devil bombs, and now I have no idea what I can possibly eat for lunch.

Then I remember something: I am not *on* Atkins. I am, at the moment, sort of puny, and can eat tomatoes or bananas or even bagels. But it *is* fun being this thin—everyone treats me like I've accomplished so much. And if I eat like a normal person, in no time at all I will look like a normal person. I buy some beef.

"IN JULY, I WENT TO PARIS FOR business with an editor friend of mine from *Harper's Bazaar,*" says public-relations executive Jodi Balkan. "It was the sales—the *Paris* sales—and she bought *so* much, and I couldn't buy anything! How sad is that? I bought *shoes.* But now the fates collide. I had never, ever considered staying on Atkins, because you always felt there was something innately wrong with it. Well, the article in the *Times* changed my thinking—the greatest story ever. That and the sales in Paris changed my thinking. I told my editor friend, 'As soon as we get home, I'm starting Atkins.' I saw her a few weeks later at a friend's baby shower, and I was fifteen pounds lighter! Now I've lost 22 pounds. I am going to do this for life! I will never be the carb fool I was before—but I'm not real, real strict."

I ask if she ever eats, say, a roll.

"I'll have a handroll once in a while, yes."

"Not sushi," I tell her. "I mean a roll roll. A real roll."

She literally gasps. "Oh, God, no. Oh, *God.* No."

There is, however, one small problem with the greatest story ever. Many of the doctors who were quoted in the piece have protested that they were misrepresented, and that they are in no way ready to endorse Atkins, because people on it tend to eat so much saturated fat—which is (still) linked to heart disease and various forms of cancer. John Farquhar, a professor emeritus of medicine at Stanford University's Center for Research in Disease Prevention, called the *Times* article "a disaster" in the Center for Science in the Public Interest's November *Nutrition Action Health Letter*, and went on to say that he was "greatly offended at how Gary Taubes tricked us all into coming across as supporters of the Atkins." His former Stanford colleague Gerald Reaven was also quoted as saying he was "horrified" by the piece. "I think the problem with the diet is not a short-term problem; it's more a long-term problem," says Dr. Xavier Pi-Sunyer, who was also a source in that story. "Despite what Taubes wrote, there is a lot of data that indicates that a diet high in saturated fats and cholesterol increases the risks for cardiovascular disease. You'd *hate* to advise such a diet."

A number of health experts and dieters report that in addition to their concerns about cumulative long-term health consequences, a problem with Atkins is that without any fruits or whole grains or cereal in your diet, things can get a little stopped up downstairs. "The secret to Atkins is Fibercon," says one happy (and regular) protein eater. "Everyone I know gets hemorrhoids or at least constipation while they're on it."

Meanwhile, people on Atkins also tend to come down with fairly severe verbal diarrhea.

"The funny thing about Atkins is, when people are on it, they want to talk about it—they end up talking about it a *lot*," says 47-year-old writer Michael Maren, who has lost twenty pounds on the plan. "I can't tell you how many conversations I've walked away from lately because I'm sick of the topic. It's funny: This past summer, my wife and I were supposed to go to lunch at Jason Epstein and Judy Miller's house in Sag Harbor. He loves Italian cooking, so there's usually some giant, amazing pasta thing. We were talking about it before we went to lunch, and my wife said, 'Listen, it's *Jason Epstein.* If he makes pasta, we'll eat it.' We get over there, and they're serving hamburgers. But nobody takes a bun. Turns out they were on it, too. Again, we spent half the lunch talking about Atkins."

"My problem with all these people who go on Atkins is that if they spent half the time working out that they spend talking about all this crap, they might actually shrink the collective bloat," says buff potter Jonathan Adler. "And I have too much exposure to the New Age raw-food advocates. I hate them. We had two come over for dinner the other night, and we were serving a nice pizza. They got here and they were like, 'That has *wheat* in it.' So we said, 'No, it's a tempeh crust.' "

Was it?

"No!" he shrieks. "Don't be ridiculous."

Indeed, while partygoers are picking apart appetizers to avoid ingesting the cracker under the carpaccio, the raw-food—or LiveFood, as they sometimes say—eaters are a growing presence in the city. This summer, a third Quintessence raw-food restaurant opened to serve expensive uncooked bits to Upper East Siders. "It makes me feel so much lighter and cleaner," says fashion designer John Bartlett. "I used to eat tons of carbs—bread for breakfast, lunch, and dinner! I felt very lethargic. I came across this book that was all about cleansing and raw foods and living in nature, and I took it with me to Italy. From there, I got connected with this yoga teacher who was doing a raw-food healing retreat at a place called the Tree of Life in Arizona. It truly changed my life forever. I'll never be able to go back to the New York stress diet I was on before! I'm not all raw now; I'm like 50 to 60 percent raw. I definitely try to have coconut water from young coconuts at least once a week." Who doesn't?

"If people spent half the time working out that they spend talking about Atkins, they might actually shrink the COLLECTIVE BLOAT," says Jonathan Adler.

Bartlett's fellow raw-food fan Donna Karan was recently pictured in *Harper's Bazaar*, sultry and svelte in a white jersey dress of her own design, beside the quote "I definitely feel nurtured by this food." Nurturing, sure; practical, not so much: Finding and arranging a daily supply of purely uncooked foods is no small project. In its specificity and complexity, the raw-food/LiveFood diet reminds me of the macrobiotic diet I followed for a summer in college when I had nothing better to do. It really does make you feel nurtured, amazing, whatever—it's like you're on some magic, healthy cocaine, and you become wildly energetic, superfocused, and suddenly everything seems more interesting. The only problem is that it requires you to make food your preoccupation, or somebody else's occupation—e.g., Gwyneth's or Madonna's chef or twig-tea brewer or seaweed seamstress. Between measuring the kombu and keeping track of what you can and can't combine with summer squash, you are left with little time to do anything else (except exercise).

But Atkins adherents would have you believe their method is as simple as can be. "Even if you travel, it's so easy—you can go to France, you can go to Greece—it's not like you have to take your prepackaged food with you," says Samantha Boardman. "You really don't have to pay attention; you pretty much know: Anything white you can't eat."

Erroll Jacobson-Sive, a 62-year-old consultant in the diamond business, has lost a cool 40 pounds since he started Atkins about a year ago. "It's extremely easy; you don't have to think," he says. "Your taste in steak just becomes very refined. You're supposed to test your urine with these sticks to see if you've achieved ketosis," a metabolic state in which your body burns fat instead of carbohydrates. "The trouble is, once you stray just a little bit, you're off. I found the subtlest things—like eating an onion—would take me out of ketosis. *Any* amount of carbohydrate was devastating me. Atkins says if you're not losing with the standard twenty grams of carbohydrate a day, then cut them out, which means eat only proteins. You can eat lighter things like fish and chicken, but not fruit. Not vegetables. If you cut out all the carbohydrates, you lose like a lunatic. I like that it gives you a sense of control—you can always get your little sticks out and go back on it."

Janet Meyers, a fortysomething director-producer, found the sticks similarly satisfying when she tried Atkins a while back. "I liked it. I especially liked dipping my hand in my own urine every morning to test if my body had achieved the all-powerful ketosis. Because of my personality and competitive nature, I would check like five times a day—that became my main recreational activity. It was this thing you could do besides weighing yourself all the time. But I actually didn't find the diet that easy to do. Suddenly, all those things you think you don't care about become important—like croutons. I never really achieved ketosis. I achieved sort-of-ketosis: My pee strips would come back reddish lavender instead of deep purple. It's like instead of getting into a really good Ivy, I only got into one of the

(continued on page 75)

FROM LOW-CARB (ATKINS) TO HIGH-MAINTENANCE (RAW FOODS), THE CITY'S MOST POPULAR DIETS OFFER SOMETHING TO EVERY TASTE.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

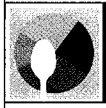
BY TARA MANDY

ATKINS

CELEBRITY FANS: Al Gore is rumored to be on the diet; Alexandra Von Furstenberg, Samantha Boardman.
THE SCIENCE: The body metabolizes carbohydrates first; cut down on carbs, and your body will burn fat. So you can eat all the protein and fat you want and *still* shed pounds.
SAY GOOD-BYE TO: Sugar and carbs. After a stringent regimen during the first few weeks (including no more than twenty grams of carbs a day), gradually up your carb intake and ease into a diet low in trans fats, sugars, refined flours, and processed foods.
ATKINS IN NEW YORK: The Atkins Center is located right in midtown. There, an Atkins counselor will develop a personalized regimen for you (212-758-2110).
READING UP: *Dr. Atkins' New Diet Revolution*, by Robert C. Atkins (www.atkinscenter.com).

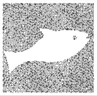
RAW FOODS

CELEBRITY FANS: Demi Moore, Woody Harrelson, Sting, Donna Karan.
THE SCIENCE: Cooking food destroys its nutritional value: Enzymes begin to degenerate; the body has to use its own enzymes to digest food, hastening aging and sapping energy.
SAY GOOD-BYE TO: Anything heated past 118 degrees.
RAW FOODS IN NEW YORK: Unless you've got a personal chef able to whip up coconut-meat noodles, familiarize yourself with one of the city's three Quintessence restaurants, which serve raw-vegetable soup, raw "pasta" (thin strips of squash), even raw wine.
READING UP: *Raw* (due out in May), by raw-food guru Roxanne Klein and four-star chef Charlie Trotter.



THE ZONE

CELEBRITY FANS: Jennifer Aniston, Cindy Crawford, Courtney Love.
THE SCIENCE: Balance the basic food groups: 40 percent carbs, 30 percent fat, 30 percent protein.
SAY GOOD-BYE TO: Caffeine, artificial sweeteners, one-dimensional meals.
THE ZONE IN NEW YORK: Zone Gourmet delivers three prepared meals and two snacks daily—all perfectly balanced according to the 40-30-30 ratio (800-DIET-308; $34.95 per day).
READING UP: *The Zone*, by Barry Sears (www.zoneperfect.com).

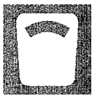


PERRICONE PRESCRIPTION

CELEBRITY FANS: Heidi Klum, Kim Cattrall, Julia Roberts.
THE SCIENCE: Pounds are shed and wrinkles prevented by eliminating foods over 50 on the glycemic index and by increasing your intake of anti-oxidants (dark leafy greens, blueberries, cantaloupe) and omega-3 fatty acids (nuts, olive oil, salmon).
SAY GOOD-BYE TO: Rice, pasta, bread, refined sugars, potatoes, and juice.
PERRICONE IN NEW YORK: Dermatologist Nicholas Perricone practices in Meriden, Connecticut; if you can't make the trip, pick up his antioxidant skin-care line, Cosmeceuticals, at Saks Fifth Avenue and Sephora.
READING UP: *The Wrinkle Cure* and *The Perricone Prescription*, both by Nicholas V. Perricone (www.perricone-prescription.com).

LIFE CHOICE

CELEBRITY FANS: Laura Dern, Clint Eastwood, Quincy Jones.
THE SCIENCE: The antithesis of Atkins: a low-fat diet that comprises fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and soy products in their natural forms.
SAY GOOD-BYE TO: Cut back on meat, sugar, alcohol, and high-fat foods.
LIFE CHOICE IN NEW YORK: Dean Ornish, the man behind Life Choice, is 3,000 miles away. But if you need hands-on coaching, the Avon Salon & Spa's nutritionist, Gayle Reichler, is an Ornish guru (212-310-6363).
READING UP: *Eat More, Weigh Less*, by Dean Ornish (www.ornish.com).



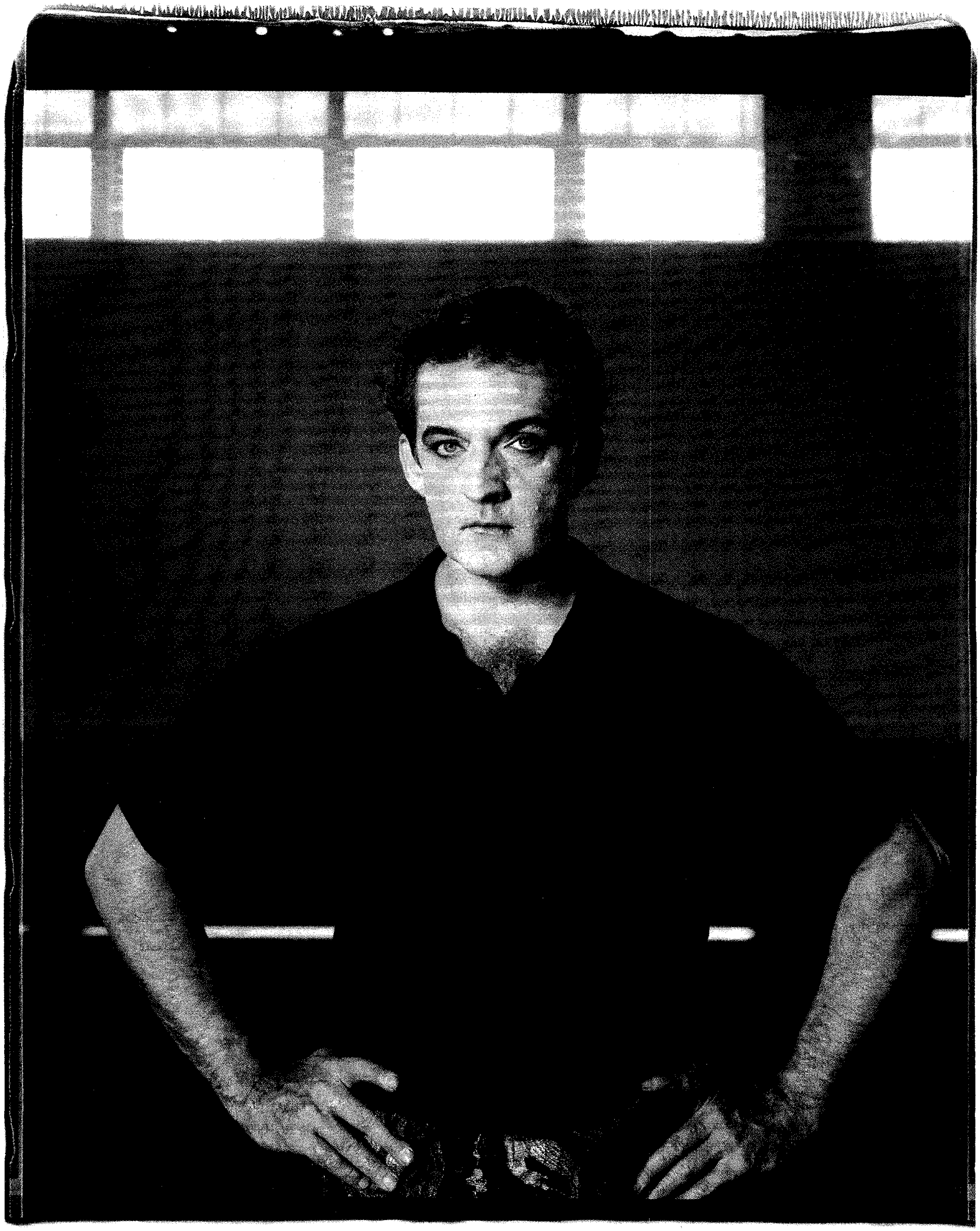
WEIGHT WATCHERS

CELEBRITY FANS: Rosie O'Donnell, Fran Drescher, Kate Winslet.
THE SCIENCE: Foods are assigned point values based on their number of calories, grams of fat, and grams of fiber. Eat anything you want, but stay inside your daily point limit.
SAY GOOD-BYE TO: Five-course tasting menus and supersize McDonald's meals.
WEIGHT WATCHERS IN NEW YORK: There's a Weight Watchers group for everyone: Creative types meet at 14th Street; fashionistas migrate to 38th and Broadway; at 51st and Sixth, you'll find folks from NBC; and so on.
READING UP: *Weight Watchers Stop Stuffing Yourself* (www.weightwatchers.com).

MACROBIOTIC

CELEBRITY FANS: Gwyneth Paltrow, Madonna, Joe Pesci.
THE SCIENCE: Eat only when you're hungry, chew slowly, and divide your daily proportions along these lines: 10 percent brothy soup; 30 percent veggies, 10 percent beans and sea vegetables, and 50 percent whole grains—plus a bit of seafood, fruit, and nuts. And lots of twig tea.
SAY GOOD-BYE TO: Meat, dairy, artificially or chemically treated foods, and caffeine.
MACROBIOTIC IN NEW YORK: Keeping a macrobiotic kitchen can be a full-time job. Restaurants like Souen, Ozu, and Angelica Kitchen can ease the burden. Or contact the Natural Gourmet Cookery School to hire a personal chef, available full-time or for the occasional dinner party (212-645-5170, extension 103).
READING UP: *The Macrobiotic Way*, by Michio Kushi (www.macrobiotics.org).

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BOB ECKSTEIN.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARY ELLEN MARK

Once the brilliant bad boy of modern dance, MARK MORRIS has morphed into a latter-day Balanchine.

The choreography is cleaner, the bodies are leaner, and he's even shed those famous wild locks.

BY JENNIFER SENIOR

EVERY SO OFTEN, MARK MORRIS'S DANCERS PASS A TRANQUIL AFTERNOON IN THEIR NEW BROOKLYN STUDIO. This could not be described as one of them. • "Stop, stop, *stop!*" Morris pops out of his seat and runs his hand through his hair. His company, gorgeous and panting, looks over at him expectantly. They're used to this by now: the brusqueness, the impatience, the periodic flare-ups that could spook a Buddha. To work with Morris, one must never confuse frustration with anger. His circuits work much faster than most. "Figure it out," he says. "Everyone has to do this step in the same size; otherwise, it doesn't fit."

Morris is troubleshooting a ten-second stretch in which the dancers are, in fact, shooting—or pointing imaginary guns, at any rate, and then blowing smoke off them—in one of the more literal sequences from *Resurrection,* set to Richard Rodgers's "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue." The piece will be filmed for television, which means Morris has to choreograph it with an eye toward close-ups, inserts, and cutaways.

"We're walking through this in bits—" Morris stops abruptly and glares at a lanky redhead who's conferring with a colleague. "Don't talk through me, please." The dancer starts to explain, then reconsiders. "We're walking through this bit by bit," Morris resumes, "because that's how I want to shoot it. This piece is going to shift gears a lot." He looks back at the redhead. "Now you may speak."

"I don't need to anymore."

Morris rolls his eyes and starts to wander back to his chair. The redhead looks helplessly at two of his fellow dancers and mouths something.

Morris whips back around. "Hello? I can *see you* in the *mirror.*"

The dancers start again, and for several beautiful minutes, Morris seems pleased. He whistles along to the score, calls out eccentric direction ("I don't want *creeping*"), and even swans about himself, indulging every now and then in a music-box pirouette. Then the music shifts and he starts to frown. The ramp-up to the ending is all wrong. He stops the company once more.

"Here's what I want this to be . . . " Morris looks at the score, starts counting on his fingers, and for a brief moment gets lost in his own head. "Think of it all in triplets so it's lazier rhythmically," he finally says. "And I want it to be broken-looking. If I were referring to an artist I hate, it'd be Keith Haring."

The dancers try again, finally nail it, and Morris spends the rest of the rehearsal trying to guide his company into a coherent finale. It takes some doing—for a while, the studio feels like a busy airport—but the shapes and lines eventually shake into place. The music stops. The company freezes. The two lead dancers have landed, with perfect panache, on their colleagues' backs.

"You know what that's called?" Morris asks, looking gloatingly over at me.

I tell him I don't.

"Choreography."

He puts his hands on his hips, smiles luminously, and gives his rump a triumphant shake.

MARK MORRIS, THE UPPITY SQUIRT WHO GOT himself banned from the American Dance Festival eighteen years ago for crying "No more rape!" during a piece created by Twyla Tharp, is now 46 years old. He performs in fewer dances these days; he's even cut his trademark curls. His company, now in its twenty-second year, is filled with dancers young enough to be his children rather than the friends with whom he came of age. When *The Hard Nut,* Morris's interpretation of *The Nutcracker,* opens at the Brooklyn Academy of Music next week, only 5 of the 33 dancers who performed in the BAM premiere ten years ago will reappear.

This kind of durability is, to say the least, a rarity in the universe of New York modern dance. Like Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, and Twyla Tharp, Morris has gone from insurgent to icon. But unlike any of the others, he's gone from leader of a "youth and pea-soup collective" (as his general director, Barry Alterman, so aptly calls it) to steward of a brand-new, $7.4 million cultural institution in Brooklyn bearing his name.

"To have this extraordinary asset," says Joseph V. Melillo, executive producer of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, which sits across the street, "is an extraordinary anomaly. Most choreographers feel as though they've accomplished the greatest task just by *finding* a studio to make their work. Because—and this you should put in italics—*there is no money.* None."

Morris is perhaps the first world-famous alumnus of the seventies dance boom, when companies were plentiful, substantial grants to small troupes were available, and enthusiasm for experimental choreography ran high. "When Merce Cunningham and Paul Taylor came of age in the fifties," says Ellen Jacobs, the veteran dance press agent, "modern dance was either ignored or held in contempt. People of Mark Morris's generation, on the other hand, could have the fantasy of becoming Mick Jagger."

It surely doesn't hurt that Morris has the cockiness and king-size personality of Mick Jagger, either, or that he first started drawing critical raves at roughly the same time George Balanchine died. "There was this institutional vacuum," says David R. White, executive director and producer of Dance Theater Workshop. "Though Mark's work was obviously very different from Balanchine's, it was also quite similar. He used the whole stage. He valued the ensemble. And he made the dances *about* the music. So there was this critical response, in certain quarters, that he was heir to the Balanchine spirit."

As Morris has matured, so too has his famous aesthetic, which was once a cracked kaleidoscope of bent legs and unpointed toes. Today, he works in lean, clean lines, and his dancers—at first a motley, even an ungainly bunch—are almost regulation-issue. "They're like a different line," says Isaac Mizrahi, the designer-philosophe and Morris's closest friend. "The company has changed its face entirely." He thinks for a second. "And its ass. The asses are smaller now."

Morris seems to take the same pleasure in his current popularity as he once did in his iconoclasm. "I don't believe that there's anything inherently criminal in your work being watched by lots and lots of people," he says. "If you're only happy with other dissatisfied choreographers watching your work, that's ridiculous."

"THE COMPANY HAS CHANGED ITS FACE ENTIRELY," SAYS ISAAC MIZRAHI. "AND ITS ASS. THE ASSES ARE SMALLER NOW."

Then again, Morris's work was never esoteric to begin with. He has always had a flair for the theatrical, always loved to make the audience laugh, always made unapologetic use of symmetry and pretty costumes and "dancey-dance movement," as Joan Finkelstein, director of the the 92nd Street Y Harkness Dance Center, likes to say. "Mark was never very, very avant-garde," says Jacobs. "He was doing dances to beautiful music twenty years ago. He's the acceptable *enfant terrible.*"

That knack for striking a balance between accessibility and originality just may explain how Morris went from a curiosity in a church basement to a star attraction at the Mostly Mozart Festival. "No artist has had a more immediate impact across the spectrum of the dance world," says White. "And none so easily straddles our singular New York environment and the heartland."

FOR A MAN WHO'S ONE OF THE BEST AT what he does, it's astonishing how modestly Mark Morris lives. His one-bedroom apartment of lavender and mint green is in a beige, nondescript postwar building in a neighborhood that's not quite Murray Hill and not quite Kip's Bay. You or I could live there. Many hardworking New Yorkers could. When he greets me at the door, I tell him this. Actually, I shout it—Bach is playing on the stereo, and Morris is whistling, with equal vigor, right along. He turns down the volume.

"Really?" He looks amused. "When I do a big piece, I don't, like, buy a château."

Though Morris no longer has the physique of a dancer (but a gut—a frank, unconcealable, American-guy gut), he still has a face of surpassing loveliness, with strong bones and eyes set so far apart he seems biologically predisposed to take in the world at wide angles. When he speaks, it's hard to take your eyes off him. At the moment, he's discussing his favorite film images of choreographers. "James Cagney from *Footlight Parade,*" he says. "Or Roger De Bris in *The Producers.* The line about him going to the choreographer's ball—that's like the funniest thing in the world. I wish there were one."

And *The Birdcage*?

"*The Birdcage* is a piece of shit," he says. "It was a horrible, horrible movie. It's offensive to queers; it's hackneyed. Though the French movie was good. Funnyish. Not funny enough." He drags on a Dunhill.

In the dance world, Morris is known for a personality as charged as his choregraphy. He speaks quickly, smokes copiously, and observes the world with cruel precision. He brooks no dumb questions but tolerates naïve ones. He also has a limitless tolerance for caffeine.

Has Morris learned anything about making people happy over the years?

"Yeah. It's impossible. That's what I've learned. It can't be done. And that's fine."

What about managing people?

"I'm still not great at it," he says. "I mean, I'm friendly and I'm funny and I'm smart and I work fast and I'm pretty honest, but I'm very bossy, and I'm very, very demanding, and I'm specific and not very patient. And though I don't mean to be particularly vicious, I know I can be. So if you can't handle that, you probably shouldn't really be in my company. Coffee?" He vanishes into the kitchen.

"I kind of think of Mark as a monster," says Mizrahi. "As a funny, cute monster that I love. Because he does exactly as he pleases with no consideration for anybody or anything. Always. And if it makes you

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRUCE FEELEY.

MORRIS DANCING: ***Resurrection*****, performed July 2002 at the American Dance Festival in Durham, North Carolina, is based on Richard Rodgers's "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue," from *On Your Toes*.**

happy, then you can be his friend. And if it doesn't, you can't."

Morris grew up in a working-class neighborhood of Seattle, the youngest child of three. Dance seemed to be printed in his chromosomes; in her great book, *Mark Morris*, Joan Acocella conjures an unforgettable image of him jamming his tiny young feet into plastic cups so that he could dance, like his sister, on pointe. His mother supported his interest. By the time he was 13, he'd taken up flamenco, ballet, and Eastern European folk dancing. When he was 17, instead of going to college, he went to Madrid to learn more Spanish dance. When he was 19, he came to New York.

Morris spent just four years dancing with other companies before founding a troupe of his own. His first big splash came at BAM in 1984, with a trio of pieces called *Gloria*, *O Rangasayee*, and *Championship Wrestling After Roland Barthes*. It was also the year of the incident with Tharp.

"I'm less likely to make a scene today," he says. "That's less interesting to me now than it was. Now I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings unless I *really* want to hurt somebody's feelings. So. Do you want more coffee? Or is it not good?" Again, he vanishes into the kitchen. "It's weird, right?" he calls out. "Kona. Maybe I'll make the other one. A different bean."

Sure, I tell him, looking around the living room. His bookshelf is a shrine of doodads, covered in disco balls, penny jars, nutcrackers, Jesus statues, Ganeshas, half-mugs. A stuffed rooster sits on the television set. Some scraps on his desk are anchored by a giant Advil paperweight.

He seems to know exactly what I'm doing. "I like oversize stuff, undersize stuff, and multiples," he calls out, clanging cups.

ON THE SUNNY AUTUMN DAY MARK MORRIS'S studio opened at 3 Lafayette Avenue, the Arts section of the *Times* led with a dream headline: MARK MORRIS DANCE CENTER ADDS LUSTER TO BROOKLYN. It should have been a glorious moment, a real coup, but few people focused on the Arts section that day. U.S. ATTACKED, the front-page headline read. HIJACKED JETS DESTROY TWIN TOWERS AND HIT PENTAGON IN DAY OF TERROR.

Nevertheless, Morris's new home base—funded mostly through large grants from the city, foundations, and individual donors—is thriving. It has 400 students, most from Fort Greene. It has state-of-the-art gym equipment, an on-site physical therapist, plush dressing rooms, three rehearsal studios, and shiny, enabling spring floors. And it will soon have a 150-seat performance space.

"I think it also has a hot tub," says Harvey Lichtenstein, former guiding light of BAM and now the head of the BAM Local Development Corporation. Lichtenstein helped Morris secure his building, once state-owned, for the fire-sale price of $200,000 in 1998.

Wait—*a hot tub*?

"He has something there," says Lichtenstein. "He works hard and likes to soak."

Just how Morris went from having no rehearsal space to 31,000 square feet of dancer paradise is no small matter—even if he is Mark Morris. Today, he is the only name choreographer—living, anyway—to own his own studio in New York. His prodigious talent surely explains some of it, but Lichtenstein thinks the most powerful explanation resides in a single word: Belgium.

In 1988, Morris's troupe relocated to Brussels to become the official dance company of the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie. His relationship with the Belgian press was lousy—they didn't find his candor as charming as the American press did—and his relationship with the critics was worse. But in Belgium, Morris realized how invaluable it was to have a home. It freed him to do nothing but create, and that he did: twelve dances in three years.

"Belgium gave him a taste of what he wanted to shoot for," explains Lichtenstein, once a dancer himself. "I don't think other American groups have *thought* that big. If Paul Taylor had come to me and said, 'I want that building,' I would have done anything to make that happen, too. But it takes the individual choreographer."

It didn't hurt that Morris had excellent and faithful management as well; unlike many artistic types, he is unafraid to delegate and has no problems working a room if asked to do so. He happily sends flowers to his benefactors, happily makes thank-you calls, happily charms people who might contribute to the company somewhere down the line. "He'll come back from somewhere and say he sat next to a rich woman on the plane," says Nancy Umanoff, the company's executive director, "and that she was fabulous, and that she loves dance. Then he'll drop her card in my lap. 'Here,' he'll say. 'Invite her to my next show.' "

At Morris's apartment, I ask if having his own studio added any extra pressures in his life. "I just don't want to be . . . *absorbed*," he says. "There's a big societal push toward smooth mediocrity. No bumps. No excellence. Not making trouble."

How realistic is it to worry about this? "It's not," he says. "But that's why I'd prefer to be seen as a loose cannon—which I'm not, and never have been. But if that's agitating in some way, I like that. The worst thing that can happen is if people go to a show and don't talk about it afterwards."

DESPITE THE FACT THAT IT HAS A home of its own, the Mark Morris Dance Group still spends roughly 22 weeks per year on the road, and touring is still how the troupe earns about 75 percent of its annual income. (In fact, it often loses money when performing in New York, because Morris has a penchant for orchestras and virtuoso musicians.) The group charges from $25,000 to $40,000 a performance, which might sound like a lot until you consider that the company has eighteen dancers, two staff members, four crew members, and anywhere from two to ten live musicians whenever it goes on the road.

Morris, clad in his favorite scarf and a violet T-shirt bearing the famous sketch of the Unabomber, is now standing on the stage of the Benedum Center in Pittsburgh, reviewing music cues to Brahms's New Love Song Waltzes. One pianist he's never worked with before; the other has never done this program. Curtain is in six hours. There's little time for niceties.

"That's *half*-time," he tells one. "What are you doing?"

"It's too long on that," he tells the other. "I want it more Viennese."

Because Morris has had very little formal musical training, he doesn't always speak in a strict musical vocabulary. If there's dead, meaningless downtime, he'll complain that there's "too much digital silence." If the music's too tentative, he'll demand more "turbulence."

Yet whenever Morris creates any dance, it starts, always, with the music. Critics have often noted—in both laudatory and scathing contexts—that there's a *Fantasia*-like quality to his work, as if it were music made literal.

"It's too fast!" four dancers shout simultaneously at the top of a particularly complicated waltz.

"*I know* it's too fast," snaps Morris. "*You're* not running this. *I'm* running this. And I'm trying to fix it." He instructs the pianists to slow the pace. They begin again and Morris lies down on his back, watching again from the ground, so that the musicians can have an unobstructed view of the stage.

"When I was first asked to work with Mark Morris, I had no idea who he was," says Ilan Rechtman, one of the two pianists, on his fifteen-minute break. "But the moment I saw his work, I had this feeling that I wouldn't mind quitting what I do and following him wherever he goes. He has a totally magnetic personality, and I find him to be a better musician than most of the men and women I've worked with."

"Musicians always talk about structure," adds Joel Fan, the other pianist and Morris neophyte, about an hour before curtain. "Motifs, repetitions, valleys, mountains—the things that hold pieces together. And what I've found with Mark is that his choreography mirrors the structure of the music so well. It's almost as if he were Schumann expressing himself through dance."

I ask if he was at all wounded by the severity of Morris's tone during rehearsal. "Of course not," he says. "When you're working, and you have a certain vision, you should never beat around the bush."

IT'S HARD TO WATCH MORRIS'S WORK without thinking of mathematics. There's a logical, deeply classical structure undergirding almost all of what he does. At their most puzzling, his pieces look like calculus; at their most dazzling, like the elegant steps in a geometry proof. Many of them are saucy—seldom do people laugh so much at dance concerts—and most are athletic; when his dancers hurt themselves, it's invariably in their calves.

"His dances were always very kinetically satisfying," says Tina Fehlandt, who retired from Morris's company two years ago after dancing with it for twenty. "It seemed like whatever movement he chose was the only thing that *could* happen—like every dance was the Ur-dance."

When Morris started his career as a choreographer, skinny, linear bodies were in vogue. He didn't like them. He preferred his dancers fleshy, and he conceived their roles in revolutionary ways. Women danced with women and men with men; sometimes, women even picked men up.

PERHAPS MORRIS HAS MELLOWED A BIT WITH AGE. "I'M NOT INTERESTED IN BEING, LIKE, EMPEROR FOR LIFE OF DANCE."

In the age of *Will & Grace*, this kind of sex-role tweaking seems almost quaint. But it was startling for its time, and it had real physical consequences for his corps. "Before dancing with Mark, I spent two years dancing with Paul Taylor," says Joe Bowie, 38. "I was always squatting and jumping, always picking people up, because with Paul, men are men and women are women. But after a few months with Mark, I noticed I could wear jeans again. My thighs were no longer too big." He pauses. "Oh. And I finally had a neck."

As Morris's dances started to change, so, too, did the shape of his corps. Today, though his dancers still vary a good deal in age and ethnicity, they look much more as one would expect—lean, conventionally shaped. And some of them didn't start out that way. Toward the end of her performing career, Fehlandt noticed that her body looked younger, not older; she had become lithe rather than thick. "They say that form follows function," she says with a shrug. "I guess this is what happened to me when Mark's dances got less galumpy."

"Hey, I never meant for it to be a freak show!" says Morris. "It was never like, 'Oh, I need more black people,' or 'Oh, I need someone shorter,' or 'Oh, I need more homosexuals.' So now it's like, 'Uh-oh—I accidentally hired someone beautiful!' It's not like I mind."

He adds that the dancers who audition for him today are more traditional-looking because their training is more traditional; most universities emphasize ballet these days, even in their modern-dance programs. "Ten or twenty years ago," says Morris, "you didn't have both of those. Juilliard used to be a modern-dance school with a ballet side. Now it's sort of a contemporary-ballet dance . . . thing. Their dancers are more . . . amalgamated, I guess, than they are versatile."

Veterans of Morris's company all agree, however, that the one thing that hasn't changed over the years is Morris's vivid and demanding rehearsal style. "It's incredibly stimulating to be around Mark," says June Omura, who has danced with Morris for fifteen years. "He's brilliantly funny; he has impeccable timing. And then he has his very bad moods. That can be hard. Sometimes he says things to us as if we're deliberately trying to sabotage his work."

She hesitates.

"What makes us able to put up with everything is that we love him and we *love* the work," she finally says. "Growing up, my dream was to dance with a great choreographer. I felt so sad I never could have danced for Balanchine. I used to think to myself, *That kind of choreographer comes along once every hundred years—what are the odds of my finding one?* And yet that's what's happened."

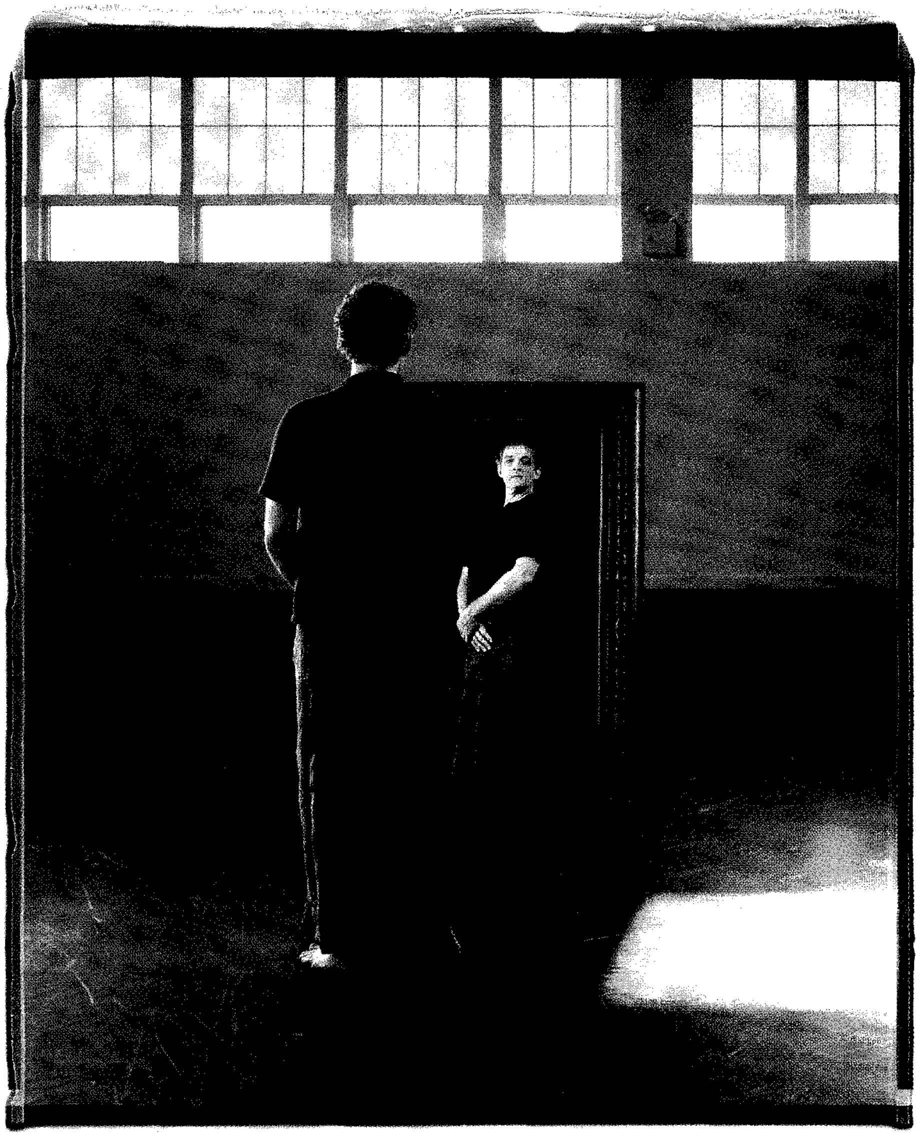
IN THE FALL OF 2001, IN A SMALL TOWN CALLED Aldeburgh, in an Agatha Christie–like hotel on the North Sea, Morris made a momentous decision after a midnight chat with Umanoff and Alterman. He had just danced that evening in an ensemble piece called *The Office*. He wanted to know how it looked.

"Because when I looked around the stage," Morris told them, "I thought, *I don't even know these people.* I feel like the crazy-scary uncle."

"Well . . . " said Alterman.

So that was that. Morris never danced in *The Office* again.

STYLING BY MONICA SCHWEIGER; INDIA SILK SARONG BY CRAFT CARAVAN; SARONG (OPENING SPREAD) BY INA.



THE MUSIC AND THE MIRROR: One of the things that has not changed about Morris's dances is their musicality, grown out of the choreographer's love of classical and Baroque works.

It was a brave thing to do. As Marshall Hagins, the company's physical therapist, points out, the modern-dance world is teeming with aging dance boomers. "A lot of them have simply refused to stop dancing," he says. "You see a lot of performances with older people now."

And Morris does still dance—but mostly in smaller, more personality-driven pieces. Because he's the man in charge, he can still choreograph for himself, too, tailoring new pieces to his strengths. He still has excellent balance, for instance. He still turns very well. He still dances with tremendous wit. "And he's still a physical genius," says Hagins. "That doesn't go away with age."

But as any dancer knows, there's no substitute for loss of power, which inevitably comes with age. It's also much harder for older dancers to do something quite basic: jump.

Getting Morris to discuss this is hard. Ask him how he's coping with his transition into midlife, and he essentially brushes off the question, saying it's natural, it's inevitable; he isn't one to dwell. Mizrahi just thinks his friend was well prepared. "He paced the funk over such a long period of time," he says, "and he saw it coming for so many years that when he finally went through it, it was nothing."

Morris also seems a bit vague when I ask whether he sees any potential successors on the horizon—or whether there are any up-and-coming choreographers he likes. "I don't know," he says. "Gee . . . I mean, I don't have a list. I wish there was more stuff I liked, let me put it that way."

He struggles to be diplomatic. Perhaps he *has* mellowed a bit with age. "I'm not interested in being, like, emperor-for-life of dance," he says after thinking about it for another minute. "I want to see a bunch of other fabulous stuff. I really do. And I see things that are wonderful sometimes. But I just can't say, *This is the thing.*"

MORRIS HIMSELF IS ON THE PITTSburgh program this evening, in a modest and wistful little number called *Foursome.* As the title suggests, the piece has four people in it, and it seems specifically designed for men of a certain age: Three are older than 40.

I must confess that for the first 60 seconds, Morris does stand out—not necessarily as the crazy-scary uncle but as a man more likely to charter you a fishing boat than dazzle you with a pirouette. (Part of this has to be deliberate: He is wearing hiking shorts and a bright-orange shirt that doesn't exactly minimize his middle.) After another 60 seconds, though, he becomes a standout for other reasons entirely. His eyes show up from the back of the house. He can wring a deadpan moment out of a plié. All I can think of is Buster Keaton. ("That's funny," says Mizrahi. "I think of him as a silent-film star, too, but usually as a Gish sister.")

At the after-party, held at a local art gallery, Morris sails through the crowd, chatting with donors and contributors to the Benedum Center. He tells them about working with the English National Opera, tells them about the crazy tics and habits of dancers, tells them about a woman who called him that morning, wondering whether he had time to drop by her dance school and teach a class of 225. ("Like, sure," he says. "One at a time!") The curator of the gallery approaches and introduces him to the artist whose work adorns the walls.

"Your dancers are your paintbrushes," she tells him in a thick Dutch accent.

Morris raises his eyebrows in amusement. "Um, thank you."

"And your last dance was perfect."

"Hmmm. What does *that* mean?"

He chats with her for a few minutes, then apologizes and excuses himself, explaining that he must "go swan."

"His ability—and willingness—to socialize with my patrons means an incredible amount," says Paul Organisak, the executive director of the Pittsburgh Dance Council, at the end of the night. "Most artists are not generous in this way."

It's unseasonably cold outside. As we leave the building, Morris stops in the street, turns to me, and plants his hands on his hips. "So," he says. "I hear you thought I was mean during rehearsal today."

Not mean, I say. *Scary.*

"Oh." He waves his hand dismissively, whips his scarf around his neck, and pulls his jacket snugly around him. "Scary," he says, "is fine." ■

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RIMA SUQI

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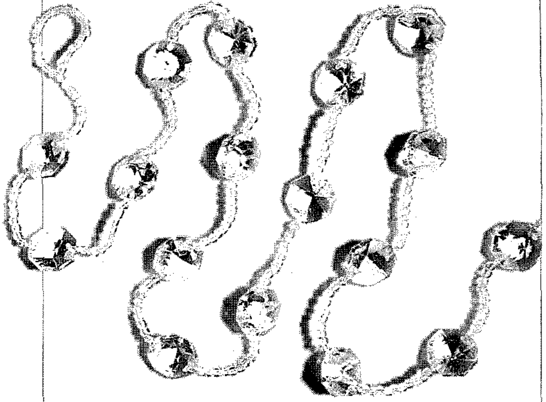

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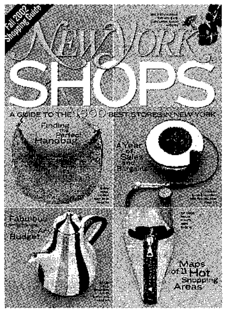
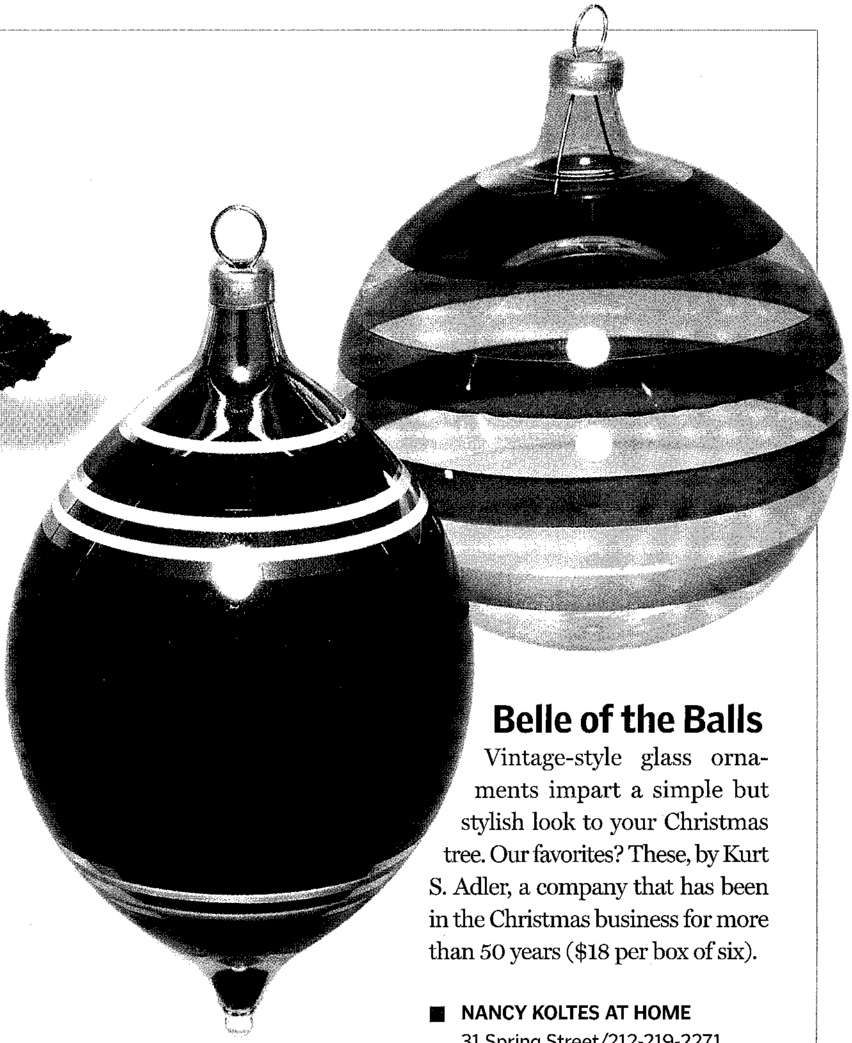


Check out the fall 2002 issue of **New York Shops**, our guide to the city's best stores, including a six-month roundup of "Best Bets." On sale at newsstands now. To order a copy, call 800-496-7833 ($4.99 plus $2 shipping and handling).



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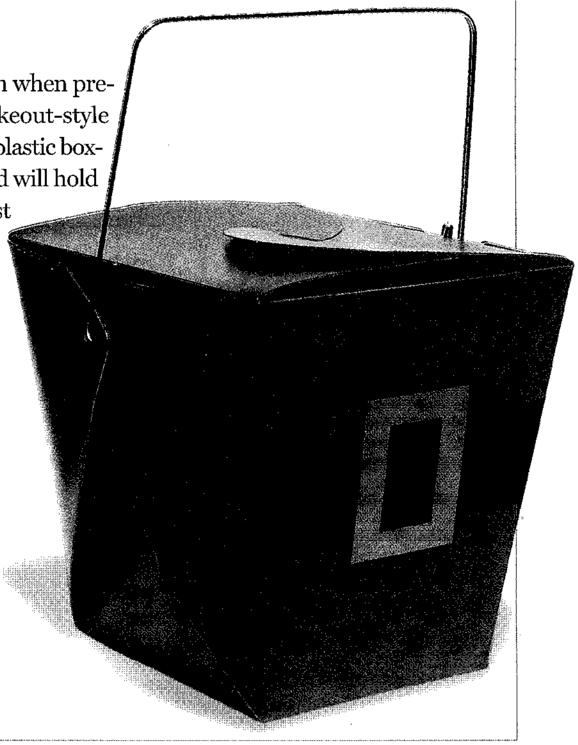

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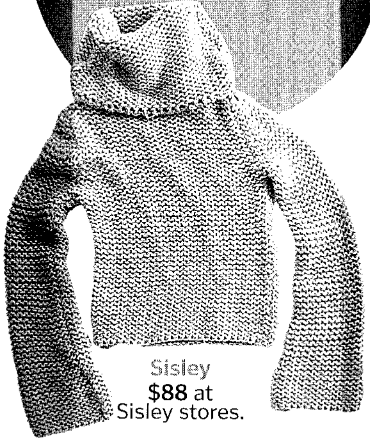

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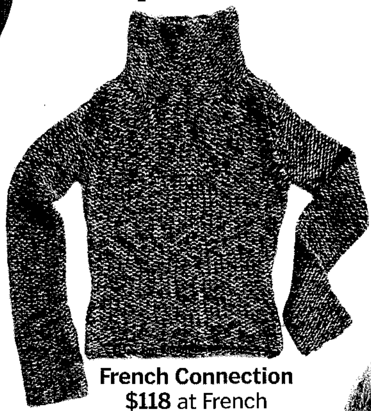

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$118 at French
Connection stores.

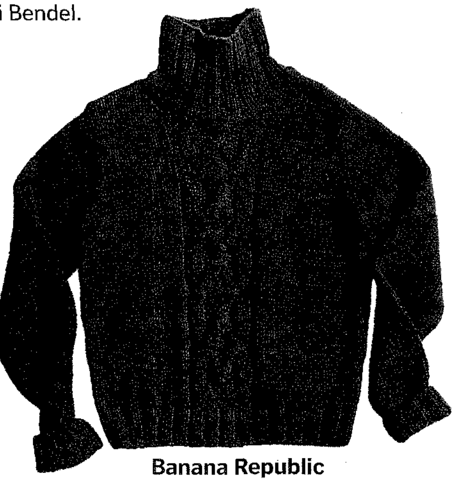
Claudie Pierlot
$168 at Henri Bendel.

Great Necks

Cozy turtleneck sweaters are the coolest thing about cold days.

KORS Michael Kors
$255 at Bergdorf Goodman and KORS
(159 Mercer Street; 212-966-5880).

Chaiken
$264
At Bloomingdale's and
Saks Fifth Avenue.



Banana Republic
$88 at Banana
Republic stores.

December 11-17, 2002

Sales & Bargains

Leigh Bantivoglio's lacy lingerie and clothes are half off ($15 to $125). 648 Broadway, near Bond St., Ste. 200 (212-420-9994); A.E., M.C., V.; 12/11-12/13 (10-7).

Lola has hip hats for 60 percent off ($20 to $125). 535 Eighth Ave., at 36th St., twentieth fl. (212-279-9093); cash only; 12/11-12/13 (10-7).

Vivienne Tam's downtown-chic designs are up to 60 percent off ($20 to $300). 550 Seventh Ave., near 39th St. (212-840-6470); A.E., M.C., V.; 12/11-12/13 (10-6).

Miguelina's flirty, feminine fashion is 65 to 85 percent off ($50 to $200). 473 Broome St., sixth fl. (212-925-0320); A.E., M.C., V.; 12/11-12/13 (11-6); 12/14 (noon-4).

Catch a Fire Clothing's vintage women's clothes are 50 to 75 percent off (from $20). 499 Seventh Ave., at 37th St., twentieth fl. (212-625-3696); 12/11-12/13 (9-7).

Sweet Tulip's sweet nursery stuff is about half off (from $5). 140 W. 30th St., Ste. 5E (212-643-1238); A.E., M.C., V.; 12/11-12/13 (noon-7); 12/14 (noon-4).

Slane & Slane's swank jewelry is 50 to 70 percent off ($30 to $5,000). 48 W. 25th St., sixth fl. (212-452-0848); A.E., M.C., V.; 12/12 and 12/13 (10-7); 12/14 (10-4).

Jay Strongwater is taking half off ornate, crystal-embellished picture frames, boxes, candles, and more (from $50). 11 E. 36th St., eleventh fl. (212-213-1178); A.E., M.C., V.; 12/11 and 12/12 (8:30-4).

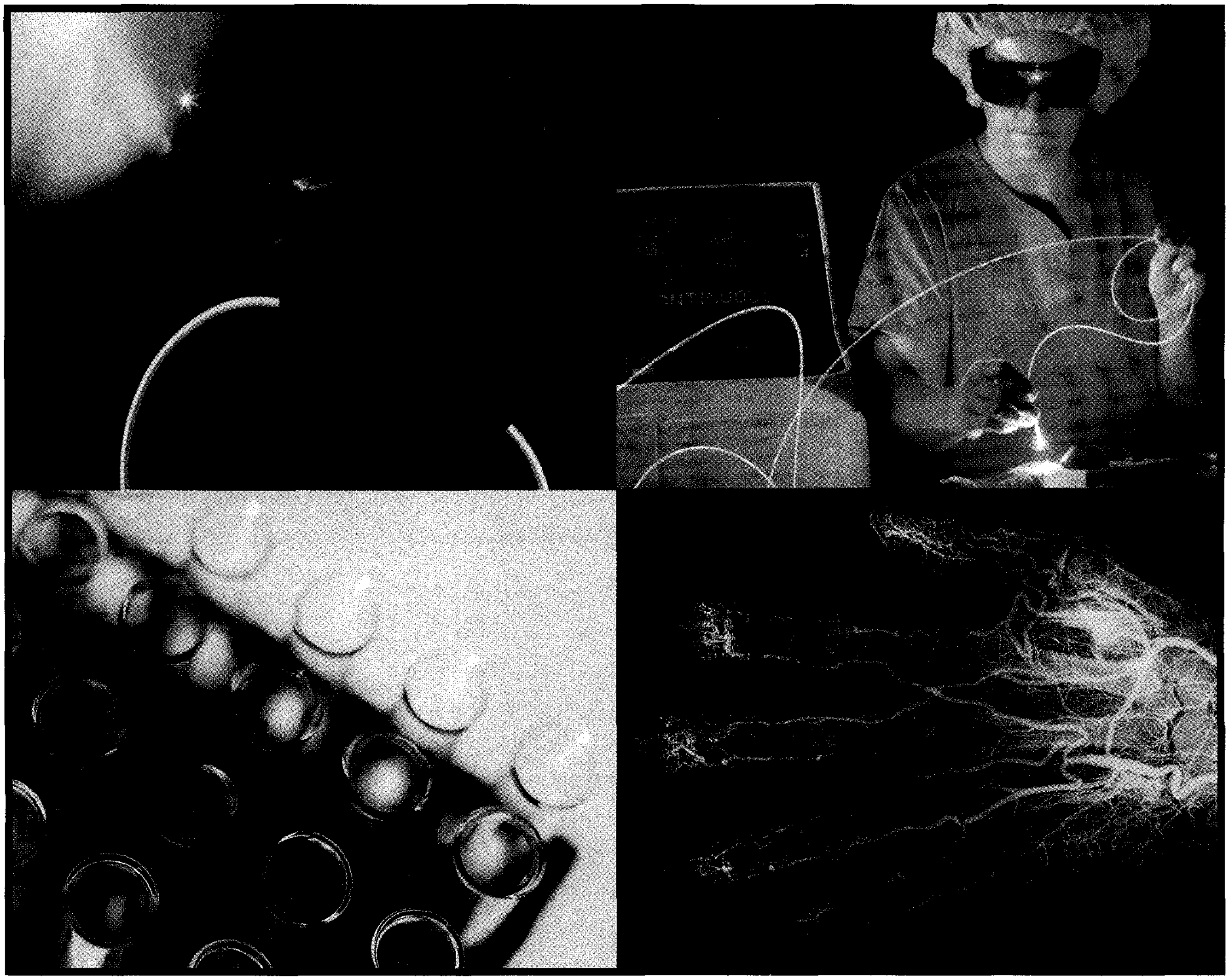
Neal Decker totes, weekend bags, and more are up to 75 percent *(continued on page 96)*

Check out the fall 2002 issue of **New York Shops**, our guide to the city's best stores, including a year's worth of "Sales & Bargains." On sale at newsstands now. To order a copy, call 800-496-7833 ($4.99 plus $2 shipping and handling).

With Aja Mangum

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOE SCAFURO.

INNOVATIONS IN medicine



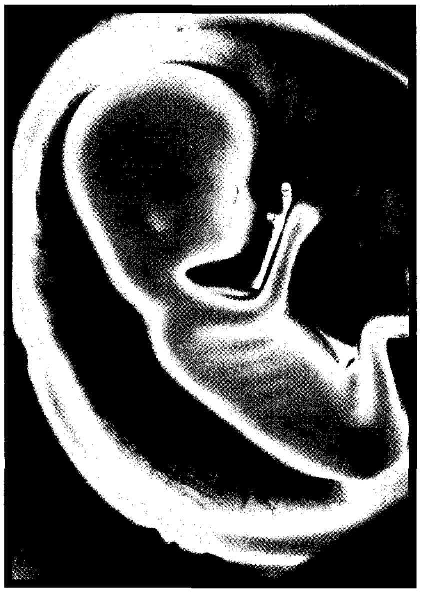
With today's surgical lasers, minimally invasive techniques, organ transplants and other sophisticated treatments, talking about medical innovations seems almost... well, obvious. Nevertheless, there are still, every year, some breakthroughs that push closer to the cutting edge than others, bringing hope and relief to thousands of patients. Here are a few of those standout advances from our region's most renowned practitioners, teaching hospitals, and researchers.

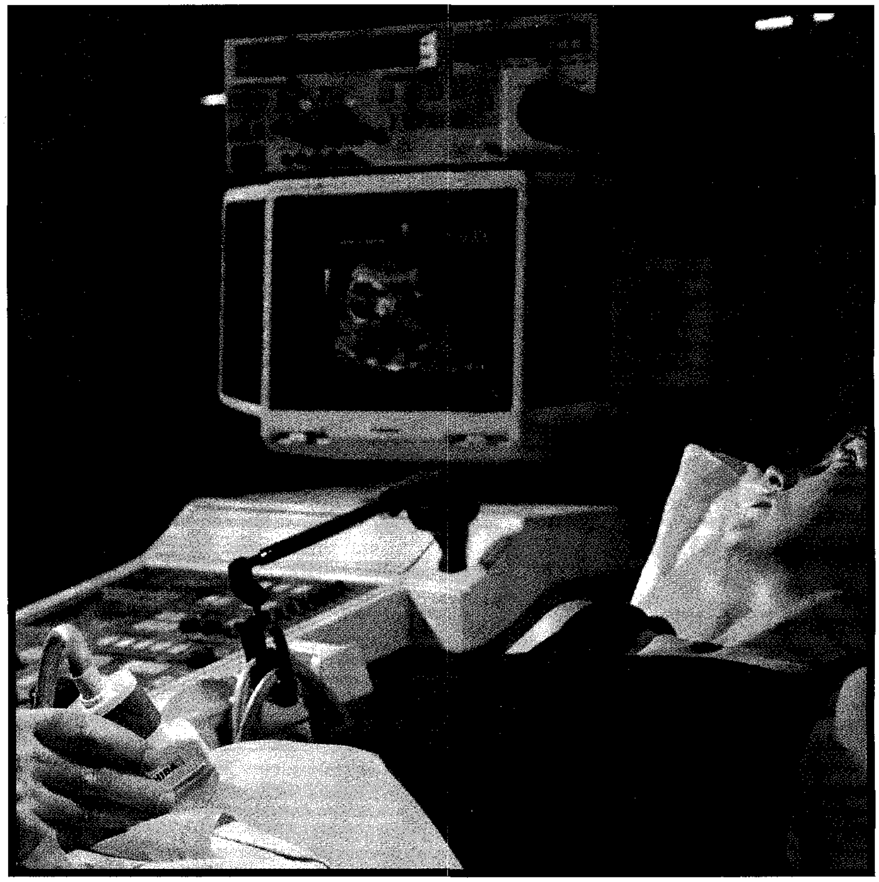
by Kim C. Flodin

4-D Ultrasound Provides a Better Look

"The name of the game in obstetric care today is to improve the tools for prenatal diagnosis," says Manuel Alvarez, M.D., chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Hackensack University Medical Center. "Ultrasound technology has excellent safety records with minimal to no risk to mother and baby, and it provides us with a way to make sure babies are developing appropriately in utero, so that we can intervene when they are not."

The newest ultrasound tool on the block is one that provides 4-D technology. The 4-D ultrasound equipment has been released only this past summer and Hackensack University Medical Center was one of the first in the region to acquire it and tap into its vast diagnostic benefits. "With this machine, we can go way beyond just simply measuring the size of the baby," says Dr. Alvarez. "The sophistication of this ultrasound allows us a qualitative analysis of the images."



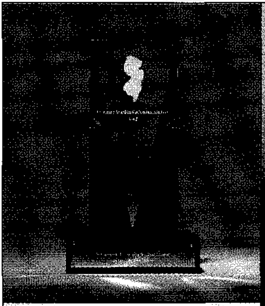


For instance, with 4-D ultrasound, perinatal specialists can color map the vascularity (the circulatory system) of the fetal tissues, thereby detecting any subtle changes of blood flow in the baby. "Even in the early stages, we can see if blood-flow deficiencies are going to ultimately upset the development of organs. With this knowledge we can alter our management of the mother to minimize the effects of that pattern before it happens," explains Dr. Alvarez. Preemptive measures might include changing the mother's nutritional or lifestyle habits, medication or hastening delivery.

The 4-D ultrasound also is useful in determining which, if any, genetic screenings are indicated. "Babies with genetic defects show subtle physical signs even in the pregnancy's first trimester. Only 4-D technology can pick these signs up. When we see those indications, we then specifically recommend further testing such as amniocentesis or umbilical cord sampling to ensure an early and accurate diagnosis," adds Dr. Alvarez.

> "WITH THIS MACHINE, WE CAN GO WAY BEYOND JUST SIMPLY MEASURING THE SIZE OF THE BABY. THE SOPHISTICATION OF THIS ULTRASOUND ALLOWS US A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE IMAGES."

Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
at Hackensack University Medical Center,
20 Prospect Ave., Hackensack, NJ,
201-996-2765; www.humc.net



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Pediatric Oncology and HUMC

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New Jersey's First Hospital –
Eight Consecutive Years

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Award for Overall Excellence

AARP Modern Maturity
Magazine – one of
America's
Top 20 Hospitals according to
Consumers' Checkbook and
Ranked Number Three
in Cardiac Services

Consumer Choice Award
Winner – Bergen-Passaic's
Most Preferred Hospital for
Overall Quality and Image –
Seven Consecutive Years

Child Magazine's
Top-ranked Children's
Hospital in New Jersey

Award for Excellence
from the New Jersey Business
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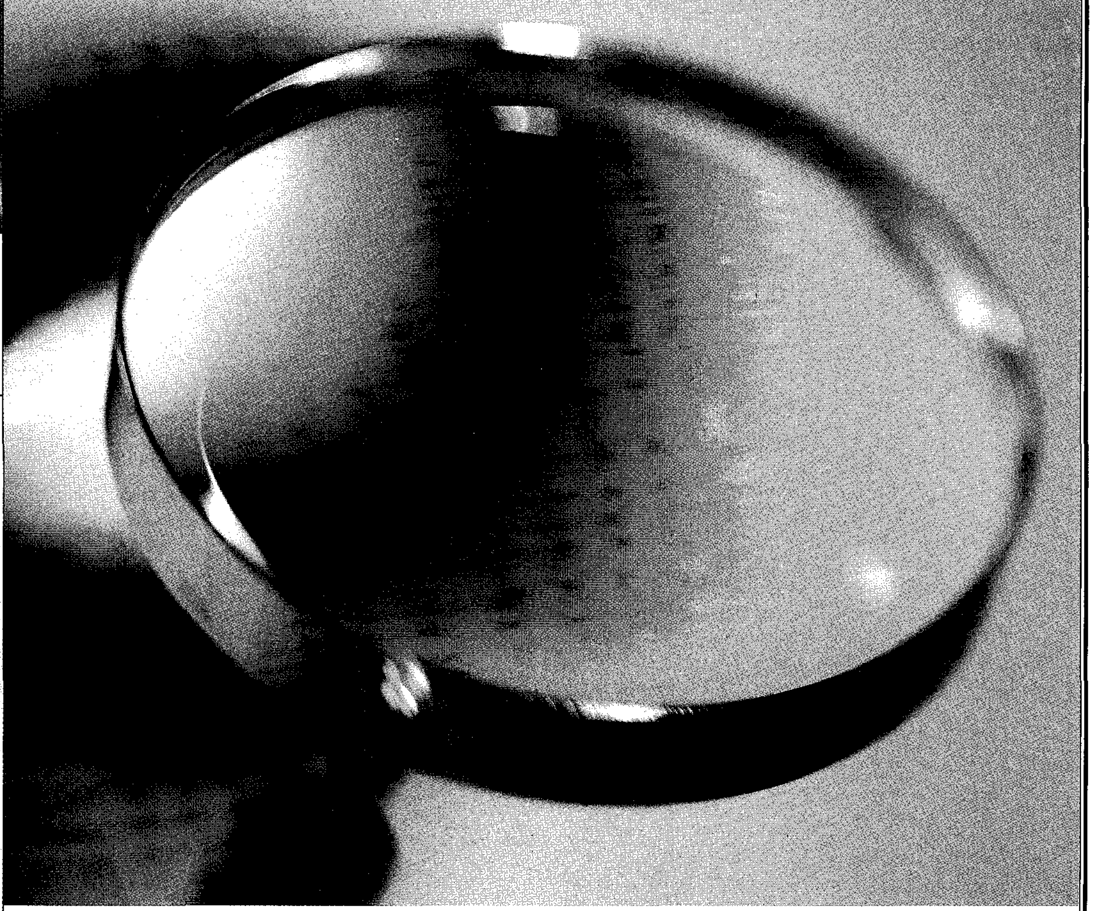
Hospitals and Health Networks
Magazine's Most Wired – for
Effective Use of Technology

PURSUING PERFECTION



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per•fec'tion, *n.* – ***complete, faultless, correct.*** Hackensack University Medical Center is honored to be one of only seven healthcare organizations in the nation—***and the only one in the New York metro area***—chosen to participate in the second phase of the multi-million dollar grant program, ***Pursuing Perfection: Raising the Bar for Healthcare Performance,*** sponsored by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Institute for Healthcare Improvement. ■ This grant acknowledges the outstanding commitment made by Hackensack University Medical Center to provide world-class healthcare, and places us among the top hospitals in the nation. It also furthers our strong commitment to ***patient focus***, while ***perfecting*** the way we deliver healthcare. ■ Hackensack University Medical Center is proud to participate in this nationwide initiative ***to dramatically improve the performance of America's healthcare system.***

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www.humed.com

Drug-Coated Stents Prevent Artery Reclosure

Drug-coated stents, a new improvement on a currently successful way to treat blocked arteries, is expected to receive FDA approval in the next few months and will "revolutionize the field," says Jeffrey W. Moses, M.D., chief of Interventional Cardiology at Lenox Hill Hospital.

Dr. Moses and his colleagues at the Lenox Hill Heart and Vascular Institute of New York have been the lead investigators in an important nationwide study called SIRIUS. This study, which included 53 medical centers around the country, set out to determine whether coating the stent with an immuno-suppressive drug called Sirolimus would prevent a process in which the arteries begin to close again due to the growth of scar tissue at the stent's site.

Stents, which are now commonly used to open up clogged arteries, are stainless steel half-inch mesh sleeves that prop open clogged arteries and keep them from reclosing. The stent is collapsed, placed over a balloon catheter and moved into the area of the blockage. After the balloon is inflated, the stent expands, locks in place and forms a scaffold to hold the artery open. The balloon is removed, but the stent remains.

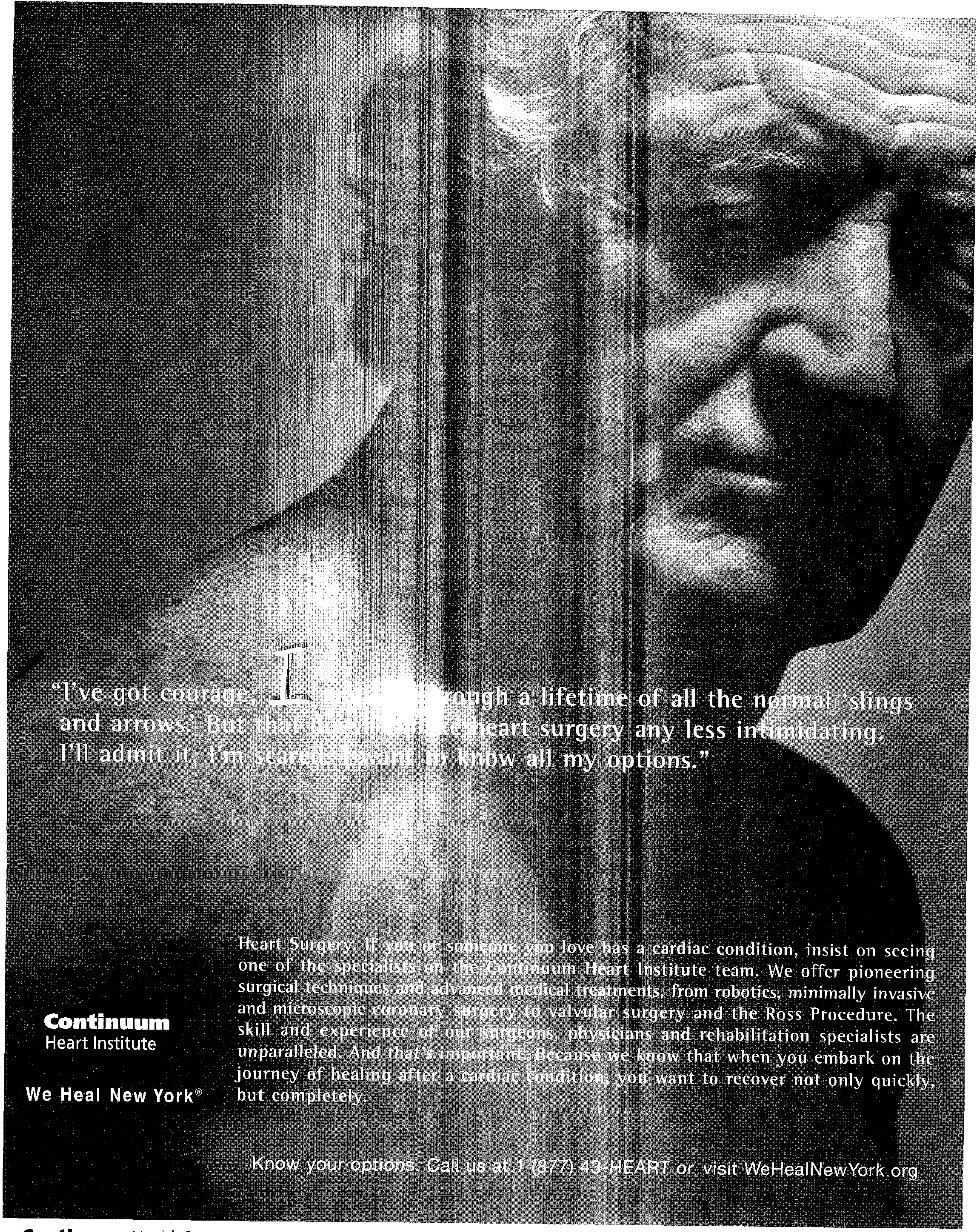
Traditional, uncoated stents do a pretty good job of keeping arteries clear, but there is still a 20 percent chance that scar tissue will reclose the artery within the first six months in some patients. "The SIRIUS study was designed to build on European studies that showed exceptional promise that drug-coated stents would prevent scarring," said Dr. Moses.

"I FORESEE IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE, DRUG-COATED STENTS BECOMING THE GOLD-STANDARD FOR CLOGGED ARTERIES"

SIRIUS recruited its first patient in February 2001. By that following August, more than 1,000 patients received stents, half of which were drug-coated ones. The study's results, which were just released this fall, showed that 90 percent of the patients had no scarring with the drug-coated stents, as opposed to 70 percent of the patients being scar-free with uncoated stents.

"I foresee in the very near future, drug-coated stents becoming the gold standard for clogged arteries," said Dr. Moses.

Lenox Hill Heart and Vascular Institute
of New York, 100 E. 77th St.,
1-877-432-7823; www.lenoxheart.org.



“I’ve got courage; [illegible] rough a lifetime of all the normal ‘slings and arrows.’ But that doesn’t make heart surgery any less intimidating. I’ll admit it, I’m scared. I want to know all my options.”

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Heart Surgery. If you or someone you love has a cardiac condition, insist on seeing one of the specialists on the Continuum Heart Institute team. We offer pioneering surgical techniques and advanced medical treatments, from robotics, minimally invasive and microscopic coronary surgery to valvular surgery and the Ross Procedure. The skill and experience of our surgeons, physicians and rehabilitation specialists are unparalleled. And that’s important. Because we know that when you embark on the journey of healing after a cardiac condition, you want to recover not only quickly, but completely.

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Ablation Treatment Remedies Atrial Fibrillation

Atrial fibrillation is an irregular, rapid beat—or arrhythmia—in the upper chambers of the heart. This kind of arrhythmia interferes with proper cardiac performance and is to blame for such disabling symptoms as weakness and shortness of breath. Atrial fibrillation can also cause stroke or a fatally chaotic heart rhythm.

"Atrial fibrillation has been difficult to treat with medications," says Jonathan Steinberg, M.D., director of the Arrhythmia Service and Chief of the Division of Cardiology at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center. This division is part of the Continuum Heart Institute. "Yet, until recently, medication is all we had because common ablation procedures were not specific enough for atrial fibrillation."

Ablation is the process by which a catheter is intravenously threaded to the area of the heart where the arrhythmia is located. The catheter heats up a very small area of targeted tissue using radio frequency energy. The tissue coagulates and is made non-functional, which stops the arrhythmia without affecting the overall heart's work.

With atrial fibrillation, however, multiple electrical circuits throughout the upper chambers of the heart cause the irregularity. "We can't ablate everywhere," said Dr. Steinberg. "It's too risky."

A recent understanding of atrial fibrillation in most patients now brings ablation back into the treatment picture for this tricky arrhythmia. Doctors discovered that the trigger of many cases of atrial fibrillation lies in the small muscle strands that connect the pulmonary veins to the heart. "These veins are not just physically connected to the heart, but also electrically connected," Dr. Steinberg explained. "This electrical relationship is unnecessary to normal functioning, yet sometimes the strands electrically misfire and set off atrial fibrillation in the rest of the upper chambers."

By ablating each of the individual strands of these fibers, the electrical connection is, in fact, disconnected, and the atrial fibrillation is stopped at its very beginnings. "We've pioneered the practice of this procedure and we find it is successful in 80 percent of our atrial fibrillation cases," Dr. Steinberg said.

While the procedure takes twice as long as an ordinary ablation for other kinds of arrhythmia, it can still be done under light sedation and requires only an overnight stay. The procedure, however, is still so new that St. Luke's-Roosevelt remains one of the few places in the country performing it.

The Continuum Heart Institute, 1-877-43 HEART; www.heart.wehealnewyork.org.

Kim C. Flodin is a health-care writer whose work has appeared in Family Circle, Glamour, The New York Times, Newsweek, Parents, Reader's Digest and Woman's Day, among others.

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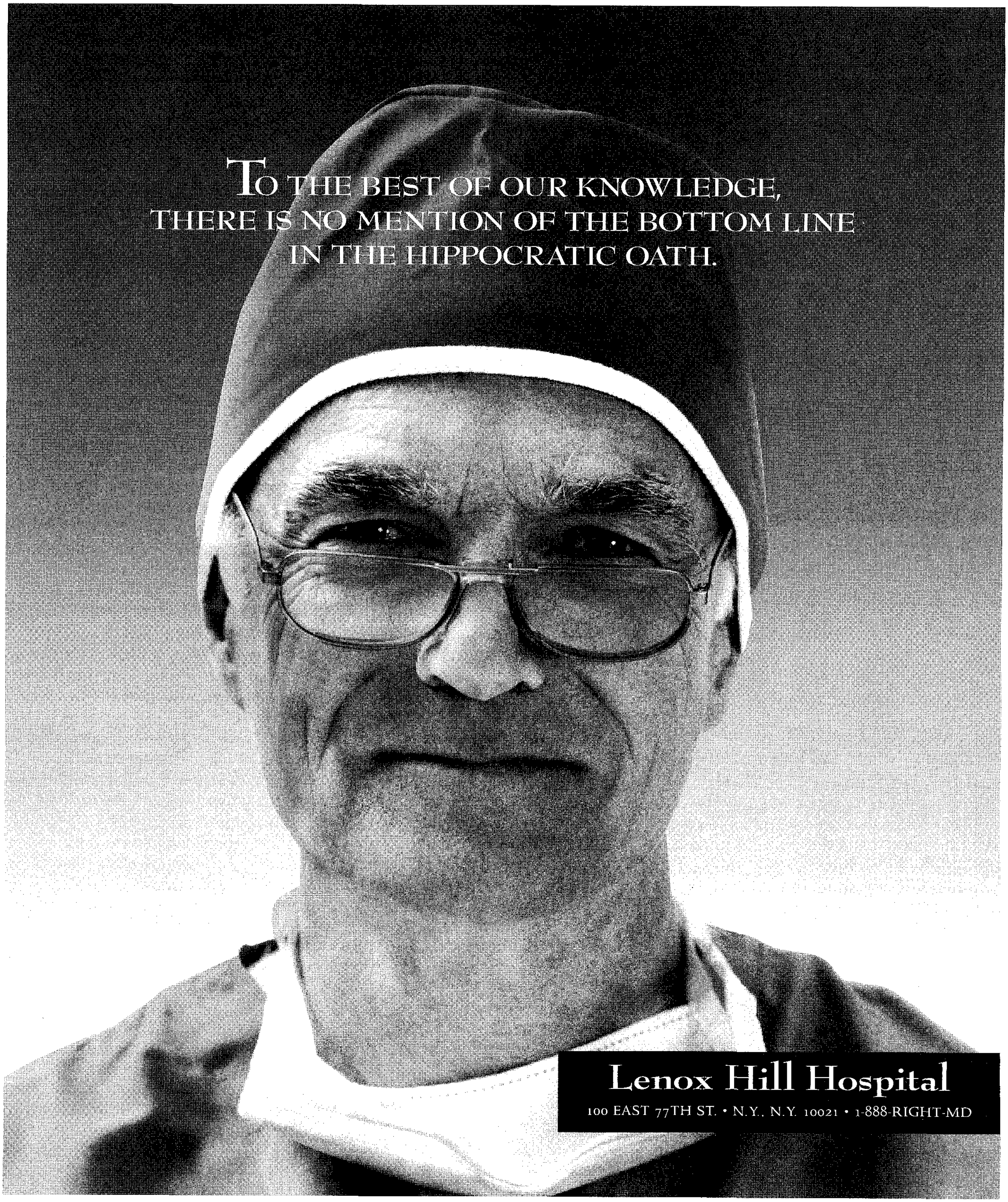
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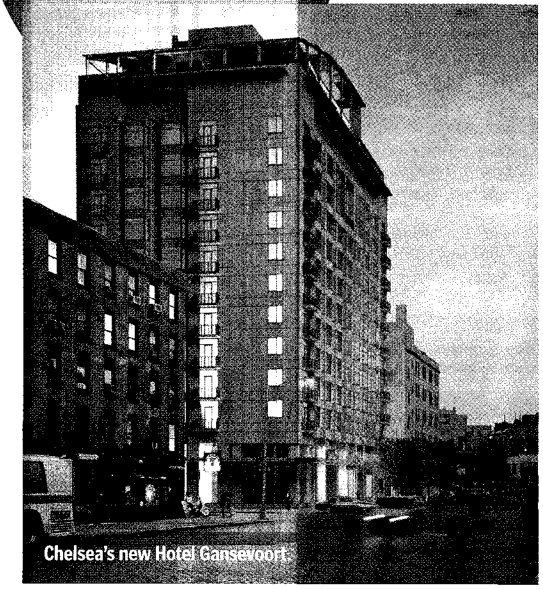
At Lenox Hill Hospital, we never forget that we're in the business of taking care of people. And since opening our doors in 1857, Lenox Hill Hospital has earned a reputation for excellence in patient care as well as for pioneering innovative, life-saving treatments. From our outstanding Lenox Hill Heart and Vascular Institute of New York to our achievements in orthopedic surgery and maternal/child health, the bottom line is we put people first. So, when you come to our hospital, you can rest assured that our dedicated primary care physicians and internists and our exceptional medical and surgical specialists will give you both the healthcare you need and the personalized attention you deserve. And that is something even Hippocrates would find comforting.

For information about choosing a Lenox Hill Hospital physician, call 1-888-RIGHT-MD or visit our website at www.lenoxhillhospital.org.

Travel

TARA MANDY


Chelsea's new Hotel Gansevoort

Coming Soon

Chelsea and the meatpacking district attract the kind of tourist who'd rather shop at Stella McCartney than be herded through the Statue of Liberty. But until now, gallery-hopping hipsters have had nowhere to lay their artfully uncombed heads at night. The Hotel Gansevoort (scheduled for fall 2003 at Ninth Avenue and 13th Street) will have 187 rooms, a rooftop pool, and a restaurant run by the Buddha Bar folks (rates from $325). And construction is under way at the as-yet-unnamed property at Ninth Avenue and 17th Street that will be a 120-room hotel. The building, which features groovy porthole-style windows, used to belong to Covenant House. We hear rooms will start at about $270.

RIMA SUQI

DEAL OF THE WEEK

Rates at New York's Apple Core Hotels—recently renovated budget hotels including La Quinta Inn (17 W. 32nd St.), Red Roof Inn (6 W. 32nd St.), Comfort Inn (129 W. 46th St.), Super 8 (59 W. 46th St.), and Ramada Inn (161 Lexington Ave.)—start at just $89 from January 2 to February 28; 800-567-7720.

Gouda for You

Le fromage has always occupied a special place in the hearts of Parisian diners, but recently the city has been beset by a ripening cheese-bar trendlet. The cheese-shop chain Maison Androuet has opened two such *bars à fromages*—one near the Opéra (011-33-1-42-97-57-39), the other next to L'Étoile (011-33-1-40-68-00-12). Five to fifteen samples, mild to strong, with salade mixte and Poilane bread, start at about $10. Earlier this year, Richard Pomaraniec opened La Fromagerie 31 (011-33-1-43-26-50-31) on the rue de Seine, where he ages cheeses that come from all over France. Cheese lovers select "quick bites," as he calls them, of four, six, or eight cheeses (about $8 to $15), to taste at café tables inside the shop or out on the sidewalk, in the thick of the Buci market. Last week, Pomaraniec opened his second branch in the tony Parisian suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine (011-33-1-47-38-20-31).

KATHLEEN BECKETT

A private cabana at La Quinta Resort & Club.

What's in Your Tent?

The humble poolside cabana has been supersized from mere shade provider to beachside mini-manse—complete with personal attendant, food service, and high-tech amenities. Here, a tour of some of the coolest new tents around. (Most rentals run about $100 a day.)

▪ The **Montage Resort & Spa** in Laguna Beach, California, which opens in February, will offer flat-screen TVs and wireless hookups for phones and laptops inside their poolside cabanas.

▪ The **Hotel Casa Del Mar** in Los Angeles has just added white linen massage cabanas to its pool deck.

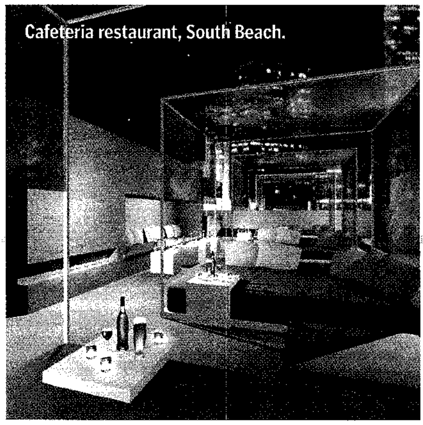
▪ **La Quinta Resort & Club** in California offers pure luxe with ceiling fans, teak furniture, robes, telephones, and dataports.

▪ Each of the 58 beachfront cabanas at the **Breakers** in Palm Beach, Florida, comes with a shower, a phone, and a valet.

▪ At the **Delano** in South Beach—and possibly coming soon to the Shore Club—plasma-screen TVs, wireless Internet, and a private butler are all on hand.

▪ The **Hard Rock Hotel Orlando** is building music-themed cabanas that pay homage to bands like the Beatles, the Grateful Dead, and the Beach Boys.

▪ And our favorite: the new mini-cabanas for pets at Mexico's **Las Ventanas.**


Cafeteria restaurant, South Beach.

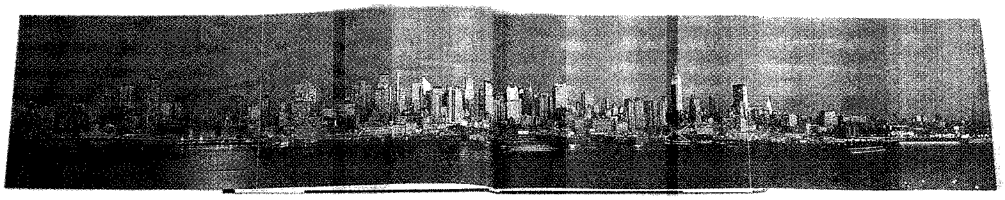
etc.

HOME COOKING South Beach continues to clone Manhattan's restaurant scene with the debut of Cafeteria. Look for the same updated comfort foods—mac and cheese, fried chicken and waffles—when it opens in January (305-672-3663). **PET PROJECT** As of this week, you'll no longer need to quarantine your pets for six months before traveling to Britain. Now your pooch or kitty will only have to wait a few days, provided she's been vaccinated and microchipped according to the new rules. Check out Britainusa.com for more information. **LOTION DETECTOR** Bliss spa has jumped aboard the hotel-amenities train—following in the footsteps of Hermès, Bulgari, Aveda, and, most recently, Frédéric Fekkai. Mini-bottles of its potions and lotions will be available, starting this month, at the Soho and Tribeca Grand hotels. **FIT TO TRAVEL** The Equinox exercise empire is now offering travel adventures for gym buffs: five- and six-day trips to destinations ranging from Napa to Machu Picchu combine sightseeing with biking, rafting, and hiking workouts (from $1,998; 212-774-6318). Meanwhile, Crunch is organizing a fitness trip to Club Med Turks & Caicos later this winter (212-993-0303).

PHOTOGRAPHS: TOP LEFT, THE STEPHEN B. JACOBS GROUP; BOTTOM, STUDIO GAIA.

cue

A WEEKLY GUIDE TO CULTURE AND UPCOMING EVENTS • Edited by Christopher [illegible]



THE *REALLY* BIG APPLE: Hats off to the production team behind *New York, New York,* in which pages unfold to nearly six feet across.

BOOKS

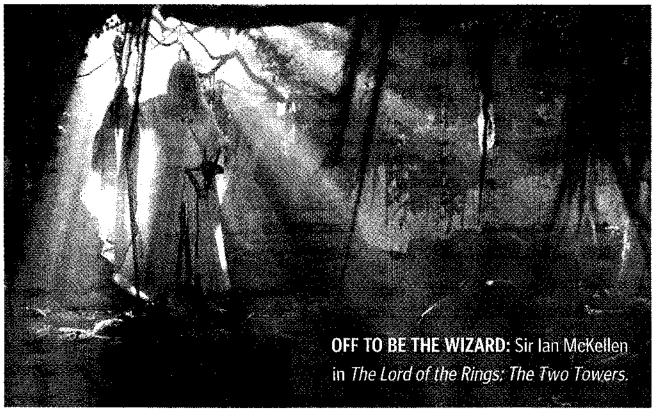
New York, New York

We thought it was just another pretty book of skyscrapers and sunsets—until we flipped open the gatefold pages to discover Richard Berenholtz's six-foot full-color panoramas of Manhattan. They'll take your breath away (as will the price). **(Rizzoli, $275; in bookstores now.)**

MOVIES

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers

The first third of the epic satisfied both Tolkien fanatics and regular moviegoers, and the buzz on part two (the cover of *Time*?!) is great. So can Ian McKellen work some magick with Oscar voters this time? **(Opens December 13; see listing, page 66.)**



OFF TO BE THE WIZARD: Sir Ian McKellen in *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers.*

THEATER

Imaginary Friends

The public spats between Lillian Hellman and Mary McCarthy gave New York literary types something to cluck over for decades. Nora Ephron's play about their rivalry, with Cherry Jones and Swoosie Kurtz, should be almost as much fun to watch. **(In previews for a December 12 opening; see interview, page 77.)**

Best of the Week

NIGHTLIFE

Marianne Faithfull at Irving Plaza

The artist formerly known as Mick's girlfriend has carved out a niche in recent years rather like Tina Turner's or Lou Reed's—a tough, seen-it-all persona that continues to give her songs power. **(December 14; see page 92.)**

CLASSICAL MUSIC

The Klezmer Conservatory Band

The chipper neo-klez movement just keeps gaining momentum. This season, the Klezmer Conservatory plays four New York gigs, the highlight being a December 15 show at Avery Fisher Hall. **(See listing, page 91.)**

RESTAURANTS

D'Artagnan's Armagnac Tasting

A French master pours the ancient brandy—which is, strangely, also a plot point in this season's *Sopranos*—every Friday in December. **($15 per seminar; 152 East 46th Street; 212-687-0300.)**

ART

International Center of Photography

Three shows celebrate very different photography genres: the tabloid playfulness of Weegee, the civil-rights-movement documentation of Bruce Davidson, and the pioneering nineteenth-century work of William Henry Fox Talbot. **(Opening December 13; see highlight, page 81.)**

TOP five

Belly-Dancing Restaurants

Forget what your mother said: Staring is required when belly dancers are present. Season bites of baba ghannouj with a little shimmy.

1. Le Figaro Café
Live music and dancing are the special every Sunday night at this Village coffeehouse. Order a latte, and don't be shy: Audience participation is encouraged. **(184 Bleecker Street; 212-677-1100.)**

2. Chez Es Saada
Dancers snake up and down the rose-petal-strewn staircase at this Moroccan restaurant and lounge each weekend. Our advice: Skip dinner and head straight for the basement bar. **(42 East 1st Street; 212-777-5617.)**

3. Le Souk
The male belly dancer is fetching, but the North African food is the true star: The citrus-prune lamb tagine will send you to a state of euphoria. Order a hookah for the table once you clean your plates. **(47 Avenue B; 212-777-5454.)**

4. Tagine Dining Gallery
A highlight of Ninth Avenue's international-food strip, Tagine adds a tummy twirl to every pheasant pie, Thursdays through Saturdays. And there are more types of couscous on the menu than rings on the dancers' fingers. **(537 Ninth Avenue, at 40th Street; 212-564-7292.)**

5. Turkuaz
Thursday night is always a belly-baring party at this West Side hot spot. Stay by the bar for a Turkish beer, or order a döner kebab in the velvet-tented dining room. **(2637 Broadway, at 100th Street; 212-665-9541.)**

ELLEN CARPENTER

Can't believe the holidays are here already?

Not to worry—**New York Metro** has been planning ahead. Visit our guide to restaurants, gift ideas, charities, and more at newyorkmetro.com/holidays.

NewYork metro.com

PHOTOGRAPHS: FROM TOP, RICHARD BERENHOLZ/©RIZZOLI; PIERRE VINET.

Jack of Hearts

In *About Schmidt,* Jack Nicholson plays a smaller-than-life-size man who tries to redeem his empty existence. But the effect is more like midwestern mockery than social satire.

AS WARREN SCHMIDT, THE recently retired actuary for an Omaha insurance company in Alexander Payne's **About Schmidt**, Jack Nicholson has the big blank look of someone whose head is swelled with nothingness. Alienation would be too highfalutin a term for his condition. What he suffers from is closer to a lifelong case of the blahs. When Warren's wife of 42 years (June Squibb) suddenly keels over, he isn't so much distraught as perplexed. Along with himself, he lets their squeaky-clean home go to seed and makes pit stops at the local supermarket in the supersize Winnebago he and his wife planned to drive cross-country. He eventually goes it alone on a kind of personal odyssey, ending up in Denver, where he tries to derail the impending marriage of his estranged daughter Jeannie (the always fine Hope Davis) to Randall Hertzel (Dermot Mulroney), a doting nincompoop. Warren believes himself to be a failure, and by rescuing Jeannie, who doesn't in the least want to be rescued, he hopes to finally do some good.

Jack Nicholson is not being "Jack" in this film, and for some people, that's reason enough to croon Oscar carols. But his work here, in its own impacted way, is just as outlandish as in his trademark performances. Nicholson is a master at playing to an audience, and he gives Warren the rigid composure of a straitlaced man who, deep down, exudes a faint daffiness. We keep searching his face for the little tics and quivers that tell us something is pulsing beneath the blandness. Warren is supposed to be reclaiming lost opportunities, he's supposed to be at a crossroads; but what we see, perhaps intentionally, is a man who never had much to lose. He explains that he dampened his early Fortune 500 ambitions for the sake of his family, but the excuse rings hollow.

About Schmidt
Directed by Alexander Payne; starring Jack Nicholson, Hope Davis, and Dermot Mulroney. See Movies listings for more details.

SITTING TARGETS: Dermot Mulroney, Hope Davis, and Jack Nicholson star in *About Schmidt.*

Contrary to the current hype, it's no great novelty for Nicholson to get through a movie without aerobicizing his eyebrows. In films like *The Border* and *The Pledge,* he was harrowingly honest and direct. Such qualities are not typically all that we want from Nicholson—he's too much the satyr for that—but at least in those films he allowed us a clear and pitiless view into his characters. In *About Schmidt,* Nicholson is giving a tricky little prank of a performance about a hollow man who fills himself up with emotion. But neither he nor the filmmakers seem terribly interested in catharsis. Nicholson keeps himself reined in throughout, coasting on his jowls and paunch and wayward wisps of hair to show us the man's liberating dishevelment. Payne and his writing partner Jim Taylor are also responsible for the Omaha-based social comedies *Citizen Ruth* and *Election,* and *About Schmidt* shares with them a sly sneeriness: These filmmakers have a feeling for the isolation of blasted lives, but they also can't resist putting them down.

Before Warren hits the road, he watches a TV pitch and, on a whim, signs on as a foster parent to a 6-year-old Tanzanian orphan named Ndugu, mailing him $22 a month along with heartfelt letters about his own deepest concerns. Excerpts from these letters periodically fill the soundtrack, and they serve as a running commentary on Warren's upsets. It's an ingenious way for Payne and Taylor to let us in on Warren's interior life, such as it is, but it's also an easy dramatic device—and it conveniently sets up a four-hankie finale.

Warren is closed off yet flatly expressive in ways that are supposed to be emblematic of Midwesterners; he's a mopey Everyman. By contrast, Jeannie and Randall Hertzel and Randall's loud and dysfunctional family, headed up by his sexpot mother (a triumphantly lewd Kathy Bates), are startlingly up-front. Payne stages a rowdy dinner scene at the Hertzels, and later a wedding, that could practically be lifted from a *National Lampoon* movie. These

PHOTOGRAPH BY CLAUDETTE BARIUS/NEW LINE PRODUCTIONS.

scenes will not exactly reinforce the filmmakers' reputations as biting social satirists. Payne grew up in Nebraska, but on the basis of his films, it would be incorrect to say he feels great affection for his roots; he wants us to know he's not a rube like the people he puts on display. A director like Jonathan Demme, in *Melvin and Howard*, could celebrate small-time rural American malcontents and dreamers without feeling the need to cartoonize them. It's the difference between artistry and knowingness. *About Schmidt* doesn't bring us deeply into the lives of its people because it's too busy trying to feel superior to them.

YOU WOULD THINK THAT WITH ALL THE HOLLYWOOD people undergoing psychotherapy, somebody could make a good comedy featuring psychotherapists. **Analyze That** compounds the problems of its predecessor, *Analyze This,* while duplicating almost none of its humor. Once again, Billy Crystal is playing Ben Sobel, the analyst in need of an analyst, and Robert De Niro is Mafia don Paul Vitti, who is released from Sing Sing into Ben's custody. Crystal is being the straight man to De Niro and, at times, we might as well be watching Abbott and Costello. Throughout his career, Crystal has gone slack whenever he isn't the star comic; it isn't just that he's a bad actor in these situations—he's a non-actor. De Niro, on the other hand, reveling in his newfound gooniness from *Analyze This,* goes off the deep end. While it can be fun to see him do slapstick in short doses, he doesn't seem terribly comfortable milking us for guffaws—although I did enjoy his wacked-out rendition of "I Feel Pretty" from *West Side Story.* Maybe what he should really be doing is *musical* comedy.

ALEXANDER SOKUROV'S 87-MINUTE **Russian Ark** was filmed in one continuous shot utilizing a high-definition Steadicam, and moves through 33 locations at the Hermitage in St. Petersburg—the czar's former winter palace and now, of course, one of the world's great museums. The director (unseen) and a nineteenth-century French diplomat (Sergey Dreiden) glide through the corridors of power as they time-travel across 300 years of Russian splendor and upheaval. It's a hyper-aestheticized meditation on the meaning of history, visually astonishing, dramatically stilted. No masterpiece, but quite a feat (and quite effete). ■

Before you head for the theater, find out what **Peter Rainer** recommends at newyorkmetro.com/movies/rainer.

IN BRIEF

Dance | Laura Shapiro

The Nutcracker, New York City Ballet; see "Cue: Classical and Dance" listings for details.

I HAVE A FRIEND WHO TOOK HER LITTLE BOY to the New York City Ballet's **Nutcracker** once and swore never to go back. They both hated it—the party dresses and velvet jackets, the nonstop gracious living, the scrupulous attention to gender roles (dolls for the girls, leapfrog for the boys). Even the second act, where the real dancing kicks in, had no appeal. And why would it, if high decorum gives you the creeps? Classical ballet is just good behavior, after all—though it's good behavior as the gods might practice it. For strictly downtown sensibilities, giant mice and dancing candy canes never will turn a cold winter night into Christmas.

But for anyone who loves believing that a well-ordered life, however prim, has the potential for transformation—that a child with a big heart might help slay a tyrant and be swept off to a banquet beyond imagining—the return of City Ballet's *Nutcracker* each winter is the season's most trustworthy emblem of comfort and joy. My own favorite moment comes in the second act, when the young Prince recounts in mime the story of the midnight battle between the mice and the toy soldiers. He's "speaking" in a movement language as bright and clear today as it was when Balanchine learned it for a *Nutcracker* season nearly a century ago in St. Petersburg. In the boy's swiftly sculpted gestures, we indeed see a splendid victory, but what we're watching is the long-running victory of ballet itself over that pettiness and disarray known as being human.

Tyler Gurfein carried off the part with great distinction on opening night, and Flora Wildes made a charming and confident Marie. (She also proved a crack shot with her slipper, beaning the Mouse King right on the head). Ghaleb Kayali was endearingly bratty as Fritz, and the eight Polichinelles proved once more that children's dancing can go way past cute if the choreography is good enough. Darci Kistler's Sugarplum Fairy bestowed sweet fortune on her kingdom with every calm, handsome step, and Jennie Somogyi gleamed with power and pleasure as Dewdrop. ■

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Take Back the Knight

Brian Stokes Mitchell's rousing baritone can't lift *Man of La Mancha* above mediocrity; Paul Newman thinks he's a movie star; Regina Taylor nearly pulls a hat trick with *Crowns.*

IS THERE ANOTHER HIT MUSICAL OF as little musical interest as **Man of La Mancha**? Mitch Leigh, the composer, made his fortune in jingles, and the songs, with Joe Darion's earnestly plodding lyrics, suffer from malnutrition, similarity nearly to the point of interchangeability, and a strong sense of being ground, churned, sweated out, the muse having turned her back on the music. The marginally better numbers—the all-rhythm, no-melody title song, the vaporous "Dulcinea," the barnstorming "The Impossible Dream"—are reprised to death; the others are either tuneless or organ-grinderish, with "Little Bird, Little Bird" offensively cute.

The gimmick on which Dale Wasserman based the show's book has the imprisoned Cervantes wooing the goodwill of his hostile fellow inmates by acting out the story of his yet-unpublished masterpiece in a kind of monkey trial before the unseen real trial by the Inquisition commences. The Cervantes story huffs and puffs to blend significantly with the Quixote story, of whose tragicomic grandeur little here survives. Everything feels hurried, reductive, oversimplified—a huge, sprawling novel resistant to being squeezed into two hours.

The director, Jonathan Kent, of London's Almeida Theatre, does show imagination; so does his set designer, Paul Brown. The sixteenth-century Spanish dungeon, in whose putative common room the action unfolds, is grandly conceived as an enormous, rusty honeycomb, descended into by a seemingly endless spiral stairway that can break up into parts or, like the whole set, rotate on its axis. That set can also split horizontally to reveal various landscapes, or put sundry apertures to use as windows or doors. One of its quasi-metallic walls can even come crashing down like a giant Murphy bed to provide a multipurpose platform. There is also more Hispanicism in this production than usual, but even so, the Great White Way remains a bit of a gringo.

Whoever remembers Albert Marre's original production may admire Brian Stokes Mitchell's Don, but will miss Richard Kiley's. Mitchell sings commandingly but dodders rather too much as Quijano-Quixote, and lacks the suave magic of Kiley's Cervantes. The wonderful Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio looks and acts compelling as Aldonza-Dulcinea, but it doesn't come as naturally to her as it once came to Joan Diener, who also sang much better. Ernie Sabella is a solid, almost overripe Sancho; the others perform their modest pensums in workmanlike fashion. But *La Mancha* is munchies: something to chew on but hardly a gourmet meal.

THE WINDMILLS OF YOUR MIND: Ernie Sabella, left, as Sancho and Brian Stokes Mitchell as the chivalrous Don Quixote in *Man of La Mancha.*

Man of La Mancha
Revival of the musical, starring Brian Stokes Mitchell.

Our Town
Revival of the play, starring Paul Newman.

Crowns
New play with music written and staged by Regina Taylor. See Theater listings for details.

LONG AGO, THAT FINE ACTOR Paul Newman magisterially made the transition from stage to screen; after many years, the reverse transition seems harder to negotiate. As the Stage Manager in the Westport Country Playhouse revival of Thornton Wilder's **Our Town**, he misses by a country mile, acting as if a microphone hovered over his head and a multitasking camera comfortingly confronted him. Perfectly gauged to the screen's requirements, his micro-performance is too insubstantial for the stage.

This *Our Town* is decidedly too lackluster for our town. Frank Converse, customarily convincing, here bluntly hammers in Dr. Gibbs's lines. Jayne Atkinson is persuasive as Mrs. Gibbs, but Jane Curtin, after a promising start, does not go anywhere with Mrs. Webb, and the good Jeffrey De Munn is rather too florid as Editor Webb. As the young lovers, Ben Fox is a too lummoxy George, and Maggie Lacey an adequate but unpoetic Emily. Stephen Spinella gets the subtext of the alcoholic organist right simply by giving his standard performance; the rest are either too obvious or too trivial.

James Naughton is surely a better actor than, as here, director. Surprisingly, the excellent Tony Walton does much less than his best by trying to do too much with the set, though, to be sure, a play in which mime and simulation preponderate leaves little room for a designer. Richard Pilbrow's light-

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOAN MARCUS.

ing, however, does its job. But something is lacking throughout, and not entirely from the play's overexposure. I think Wilder miscalculated in mixing sassy stylization with down-home realism, then switching to rather facile fantasy. There is a problem with almost all of Wilder's theater: a certain complacency verging on smugness, an avuncular irony that smacks of condescension.

ONCE UPON A TIME, A SHOW CALLED *SPOON River Anthology* was a kind of play with music. Popular with others, it did not for me coalesce into drama, and left me forever suspicious of "plays with music." We get one such in **Crowns**. The actress-director-playwright Regina Taylor has taken Michael Cunningham's book of photographs of black women in their spunkily hypertrophic churchgoing hats, accompanied by Craig Marberry's oral histories of the women, and added an ad hoc plot of her own contrivance. With mostly traditional spirituals, she has fashioned an exuberant play with music—that left me unmoved.

The story is utterly predictable: Brooklyn teenage girl with no use for hats or church is transplanted to the South, where she learns to love both, and to prefer spirituals to rap. She gets a grandmotherly guide and meets other highly colorful women in their millinery splendor, all full of crusty comments and wryly acted anecdotes. But a half-dozen performers purveying numerous sketchy figures remain fragments rather than compelling characters, and the Brooklyn girl is a mere cliché.

Some good things obtain. The resourceful Lawrence Clayton, who deftly personates a sizable contingent of men, sings one of the few nonspirituals, Sam Cooke's rousing "Touch the Hem of His Garment," with irresistible ardor. David Pleasant, one of the two musicians, plays some twenty odd but fetching instruments with what feels like at least twenty irrepressible hands; he's the real show. Riccardo Hernández's set has columns of lavish hats rise cheerfully skyward, and Robert Perry lets his gaudy lights rip. I don't care for Carmen Ruby Floyd as the novitiate, but I do for the five other actresses, especially for Ebony Jo-Ann and Lillias White, as long as she doesn't sing. Taylor's staging is appropriately giddy, and triumphs even over Ronald K. Brown's rudimentary choreography. ■

John Simon's reviews can be read at nymetro.com/archive/simon.

ART MARK STEVENS

Out of Line

MoMA's exuberant survey of contemporary drawing rescues the genre from second-class status.

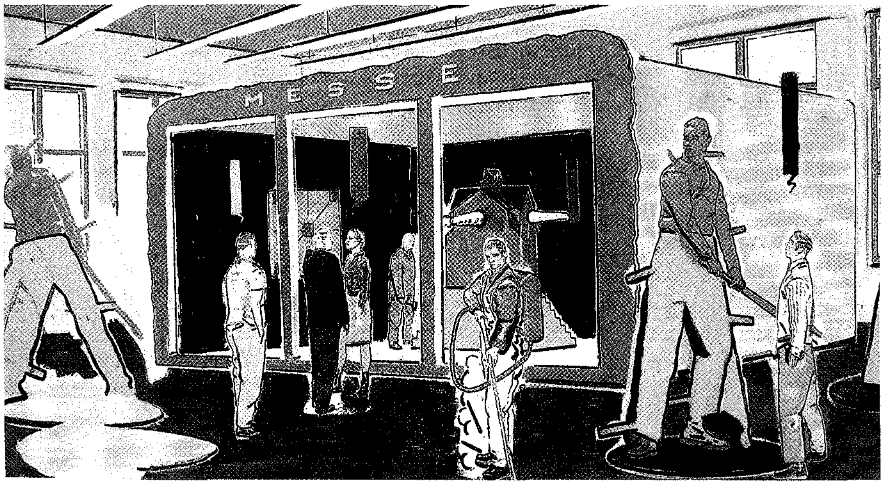
AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE exhibition **Drawing Now: Eight Propositions**, an ambitious survey of contemporary work currently at MoMA QNS, the curators present a wall drawing of a vast prison. Instead of barred windows or cells, however, *Cárcel (Prison)* contains row upon row of drawers, rather like those found in an old-fashioned apothecary's cabinet. The artists who made the drawing—a Cuban collective named Los Carpinteros—have attached an actual knob on each drawer, a reality-and-illusion game that's further enhanced by some play with shadow and perspective. The knobs seem to invite the viewer to pull out a drawer to explore whatever strange mystery lies inside, thereby liberating the prison.

Cárcel symbolically captures the exhibit's character. Not only are viewers invited to examine the various interpretive boxes into which contemporary drawings are placed, but the show's organizer, Laura Hoptman, emphasizes the theme of emancipation—the liberation of drawings into fully complete and "autonomous" works. Today's artists have burst free, she argues, from "the old criteria having to do with form, finish, and manner of execution, or by the designation of fine or avant-garde art." Drawing, she says, is "all you need." Hoptman is doubtless right that for many artists, drawing is no longer a secondary genre. In moving through the show, however, I had the perverse impression that the emancipations of modern culture were also creating new forms of confinement. That's the way it has often worked: One day's liberation becomes the next day's constraint.

"Drawing Now" contains about 250 drawings by 26 younger artists from around the world. Its eight propositions are rough thematic groupings, among them "Ornament," "Visionary Architecture," "Comics and Animation," and "Fashion and Likeness." What all these artists have in common is a desire to find inspiration beyond the pale of what has traditionally been considered fine art. They look to either the vernacular forms of mass culture, such as comics or fashion, or kinds of drawing often

Drawing Now: Eight Propositions
Survey of contemporary work at MoMA QNS.

Kazari: Decoration and Display in Japan, 15th–19th Centuries
At the Japan Society.
See Art listings for details.



BREAKING TRADITION: Comic-book imagery and socialist realism in Neo Rauch's *Messe*, at MoMA's "Drawing Now."

PHOTOGRAPH FROM GALERIE EIGEN+ART/MOMA.

treated with condescension, such as architectural drafting or ornamental design. Even those, such as Elizabeth Peyton, who make images that recall conservative realism depend more upon the techniques of contemporary fashion illustration than they do upon schooled ways of figurative drawing. Young artists of this era rarely try to get the gist of their times by describing surface appearances. Instead, like postmodern Marxists, they adopt, celebrate, and subvert the means of production.

Two sometimes complementary approaches, or currents of feeling, repeatedly surface across the eight groupings in the show. On the one hand, many artists employ a kind of doodling playfulness that rejects both the dry, graduate-school seriousness and the heavy ideological earnestness of much art made during the past 40 years. Chris Ofili, for example, makes roping, ornamental designs that at first glance appear to be made of little dark beads. But the dark beads are actually itty-bitty heads with Afro hairstyles; some Ofili titles, such as *Albinos and Bros with Fros,* tease away rather than frontally attack racist thinking. On the other hand, an apocalyptic strain also attracts many artists, especially those influenced by architectural drawing. Paul Noble's architectural fantasies look like the nightmares of a children's-book illustrator. Julie Mehretu makes drawings in which the measured lines and spaces of traditional architectural drafting implode into mayhem. Toba Khedoori's wall hangings cut metaphysical doors and windows into a bleached void.

It seems strange that given the extraordinary changes created by the millennial mood and the information revolution, no visionaries have emerged to imagine a more optimistic future. There are no utopians here who display the kind of forward-looking joy found in the early decades of the last century. (The future has a great past.) Matthew Ritchie's *Everyone Belongs to Everyone Else* looks like the aftermath of a nuclear holocaust, a time of skeletons on the beach and decaying space suits; like many young artists, he has a way of penciling important-seeming notes and formulas on his work that, while appearing to offer us explanations of what's occurring, turn such pretensions to rational understanding into gibberish. Neo Rauch, a German who grew up behind the Iron Curtain, creates pictures populated by anachronistic characters resembling the figures in comic books, old advertising, and Soviet and Fascist propaganda. They work around machines that would once have appeared futuristic but now look as dated as a yellowing calendar from the thirties.

In this exhibition, the emancipation of drawing occurs on levels well beyond the granting of equality to a genre frequently regarded as less important than painting. Artists today feel no obligation to perpetuate the craft and practice of drawing that absorbed artists from the Renaissance until the mid-twentieth century. In a larger sense, they are also free from the arduous submission to tradition that T. S. Eliot believed must first occur before an artist can create work of significant originality. (Few of the artists here would agree with Ingres's observation that drawing is the "probity" of art.) Although the emancipation of drawing from such restraints has led to many brilliant bursts, the losses are also obvious. Without the ongoing support of tradition, artists often have little but their individuality—reflecting the Babel of selves that is modern culture—and often yield to a kind of regressive narcissism in their view of the world. They resemble self-made folk artists who piece together art from what's left in the drawers, except that they are so painfully self-conscious. The permissions of postmodernism can create a free-form prison.

Kazari: Decoration and Display in Japan, 15th–19th Centuries at the Japan Society focuses on an elusive but stimulating Japanese idea about decoration. Instead of letting the decorative remain secondary, the Japanese regularly placed their razzle-dazzle front and center. Their hope was to bewitch not only the eyes but also the soul. Carefully arranging the interplay of objects and paintings could create an open-ended and dynamic stream of messages, insights, and allusions. Decoration could, in short, embody the play of consciousness itself. Although the extraordinary pictures, clothing, and objects on display in this show (organized by the Japan Society and the British Museum in association with the Suntory Museum of Art, Tokyo) require no justification, making arrangements that are joyfully significant seems particularly appealing at the moment. I can't imagine a better vantage point from which to cock an eye at our Christmas displays. ■

Mark Stevens's reviews can be read at nymetro.com/archive/stevens.

IN BRIEF

Television | John Leonard

- **An Evening With the Dixie Chicks** (December 10; 8 to 9 P.M.; NBC), at the Kodak Theater in Los Angeles last August, means a minimum of chitchat, a maximum of pep, and a wonderfully mean rendition of their signature song about killing the abusive Earl.

- **Rocks With Wings** (DECEMBER 11; 9 TO 11 P.M.; Channel 13) tells the story of the Lady Chieftains, a high-school basketball team from the Navajo community of Shiprock, New Mexico, and the African-American coach from Texas who cajoled them to a championship.

- **Hackers: Outlaws and Angels** (December 11; 10 to 11 P.M.; TLC), while enjoying the time it spends with such roguish cyber-crime lords as Captain Zap and Cold Fire, decides to View With Alarm. These people are cheating the telephone company and reading the Pentagon's mail! And some of them turn out to be Chinese! Meet the "digital detectives" who are fighting back.

- **The Santa Trap** (DECEMBER 13; 8 TO 10 P.M.; PAX) asks us to care whether Dick Van Patten or Stacy Keach is the real Santa and should therefore be released from jail by Sheriff Corbin Bernsen in time to make his Christmas rounds even if the weather in the great Southwest is far too warm for transplanted New Englander Shelley Long to get in the holiday spirit.

- **I Was a Teenage Faust** (DECEMBER 15; 8 TO 9:45 P.M.; Showtime), with Robert Townsend as Mr. Five, an apparatchik of Stuart Margolin's Mephisto, hasn't delivered a soul to hell in almost fifteen years. It's the territory: central Indiana. But then he discovers Josh Zuckerman being laughed at by all the cool kids in high school, including his own twin sister. There is a country club. There is Morgan Fairchild. There are even some amusing moments.

- **New Zealand: The Royal Tour** (DECEMBER 15; 9 to 10 P.M.; Travel) looks in on Auckland, the limestone caves of Waitomo, the sacred Maori grounds of Whakarewarewa, the Southern Alps, the Tasman Sea, and anywhere else Prime Minister Helen Clark can get to by jet boat or kayak.

- **The Man Who Saved Christmas** (December 15; 9 to 11 P.M.; CBS) stars Jason Alexander as A. C. Gilbert, the man who invented the Erector Set and who would rather he didn't have to turn his toy factory into a munitions plant during World War I. Ed Asner plays his father, Kelly Rowan plays his wife, and I believe every other word of it. ■

Grains of Truth

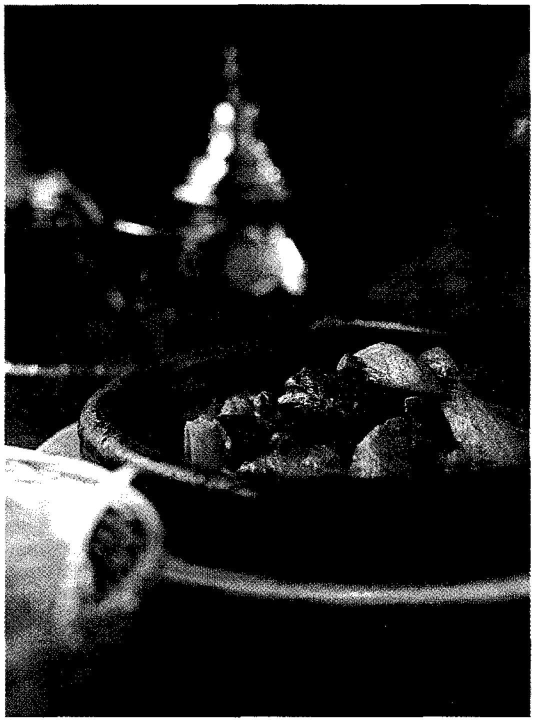
La Maison du Couscous's namesake dish hits the mark—and that's just the beginning. With Moroccan food this satisfying, you'll never miss the belly-dancer.

DINING OUT IN NEW YORK often seems like 50 percent theater—except at Moroccan restaurants, where it's more like 75. By the time you contort yourself into a spine-challengingly low seat, gape at the jiggling belly-dancer, and admire your costumed server's prowess at pouring perfect arcs of mint tea from great heights (from where you sit, any height seems great), food becomes an afterthought. This is emphatically not the case at **La Maison du Couscous**, a modest café and mecca of traditional Moroccan food worth the long pilgrimage to Bay Ridge on the R train.

In real-estate terms, La Maison is less house than studio w/EIK: a handful of glass-topped tables running along a thin-cushioned banquette separated from the cramped kitchen by a display case of prepared salads and jarred olives. If you're looking for "atmosphere," you won't find it in a scattering of rose petals or tasseled pillows nestled in dark corners. Instead, it takes the form of soft strains of Arabic music and the equally mellow conversational tones of locals lingering over shot-size glasses of Moroccan coffee.

Moroccans at a Moroccan restaurant is a promising sign. Still, we were momentarily taken aback when we saw what looked like a burger posing on the menu as a "traditional Moroccan sandwich." But the kafta—a few nicely seasoned, juicy ground-lamb patties on a fluffy French baguette smeared with garlicky peppers and tomatoes and dabbed with hot sauce—isn't a timid concession to American appetites. It can't be, with so many Moroccan customers ordering it. "That guy gets two at a time, with fries," said our charming track-suit-wearing waitress, gesturing to the solo diner beside us. And so would we, if there weren't so many other delectable things to try.

La Maison du Couscous
484 77th Street,
Bay Ridge, Brooklyn
(718-921-2800).



HOUSE CALL: A lamb tagine from La Maison du Couscous in Bay Ridge.

Starting with the spicy cracked green olives that come to the table with a dense, spongy disk of Moroccan bread, baked on the premises and built for scooping up spreadlike salads made from mildly spiced eggplant or cooked spinach. Chicken b'steeya, a sweet and savory pie stuffed with dark and white meat, giblets, ground almonds, and fragrant spices, is dusted with cinnamon and sugar; if the pastry dough was slightly chewy, the superrich flavor of the filling redeemed it.

But when you find yourself in an establishment called La Maison du Couscous, it's only a matter of time before you're ineluctably drawn to the main attraction. Couscous is the national dish of Morocco, where the steamed semolina grains are often rolled into balls and eaten with the first three fingers of the right hand (four or five is greedy and one is a sign of hatred, according to folklore). In Brooklyn, though, forks are provided, and so is harissa, the chili-pepper condiment that animates a mound of fluffy grains topped with long-cooked, toothsome lamb shanks or chicken, and various combinations of stewed onions, swollen yellow raisins, and soft chickpeas.

If couscous is all fluffy texture, and b'steeyas rely on labor-intensive pastry layers, then tagines—those aromatic stews cooked in shallow earthenware dishes with conical lids—are the earthy, succulent result of meat succumbing to its fork-tender fate. Morocco boasts more than 100 tagine recipes, and La Maison features fourteen of them, mostly made from skin-on, bone-in chicken or fatty lamb shanks, both remarkably moist and unctuous, and accessorized with plump velvety prunes and slivered almonds; or artichoke bottoms and green peas; or the tart contrast of preserved lemon and olives.

Moroccans have been known to eat honey-drenched pastries before a feast, and, true to form, our waitress treated us to a plate of homemade variations on the honey-and-almond theme while we waited for our meal one night. La Maison does big business in these confections; they're stored in plastic-domed cake stands and wrapped in party-size packages to go. But have them there, like we did, with sweet mint tea, poured from a silver pot with only a modest flourish. Drama has its place, but you can't chew the scenery. ■

La Maison du Couscous, seven days, 11 A.M. to midnight. Appetizers, $3 to $4.50; entrées, $7.95 to $9.95. All major credit cards.

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PHOTOGRAPHED BY PATRIK RYTIKANGAS.

Movies

Edited by Ben Kaplan

NEW THIS WEEK

About Schmidt
See Rainer, page 60. (2 hrs. 5 mins.; R) • Opens 12/13.

El Bola
A troubled 12-year-old (Juan José Ballesta) from an abusive family befriends the new kid in school (Pablo Galán), whose kindhearted folks provide an alternative to his misery. Episodic, surprisingly unsentimental look at friendship and family avoids creating easy villains, but the real highlights are the stunning performances from its two young leads. (1 hr. 28 mins.; NR) • Opens 12/13.

Boom—The Sound of Eviction
Involving look at gentrification in San Francisco during the tech boom, when ethnic communities were displaced, often evicted, to make way for high-rolling dot-commers. Not exactly a balanced portrait—the film clearly sides against the encroachers, and stacks the deck by offering little of their perspective. Still, a worthwhile glance at a social problem with universal resonance. (1 hr. 36 mins.; NR) • Opens 12/13.

Drumline
Set in the the world of black-college marching bands, where a streetwise Harlem musician earns a scholarship to A&T, a prestigious Georgia university. Directed by Charles (*Paid in Full*) Stone III; introducing Nick Cannon. (1 hr. 59 mins.; PG-13) • Opens 12/13.

Evelyn
Pierce Brosnan stars in this true story of a father who challenged the Irish Supreme Court for custody of his three kids in 1953. Co-starring Stephen Rea and Julianna Margulies; directed by Bruce (*Driving Miss Daisy*) Beresford. (1 hr. 34 mins.; PG) • Opens 12/13.

The Hot Chick
Rob Schneider plays a dude who inhabits the body of a good-looking girl who once dissed him. (1 hr. 41 mins.; PG-13) • Opens 12/13.

Intacto
Labyrinthine Spanish thriller has a group of risk-takers who are gifted with luck (which, the film purports, is something you can actually control) competing to see who gets to gamble in a mysterious desert casino. Elaborate, diffuse plot is initially hard to follow, but picks up for a surprisingly powerful finale. Co-starring Eusebio Poncela and Leonardo Sbaraglia. In Spanish, with English subtitles. (1 hr. 48 mins.; R) • Opens 12/13.

The Jimmy Show
A frustrated dreamer (Frank Whaley, who also directed) copes with his dead-end working-class existence while trying to become a stand-up comic, although all he has to offer is bitter ranting. Whaley hits an impressive range of emotions, but the film so wallows in his character's despair that it's hard to take it seriously. Co-starring Carla Gugino and Ethan Hawke. (See box.) (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) • Opens 12/13.

PRODUCT PLACEMENT: Ralph Fiennes covers Jennifer Lopez in *Maid in Manhattan,* opening this Friday.

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers
Peter Jackson's second J.R.R. Tolkien adaptation once again stars Elijah Wood—amid a host of monsters, wizards, and talking trees—as the young Hobbit Frodo, still perilously in possession of the all-powerful One Ring. Co-starring Liv Tyler, Ian McKellen, Sean Astin, and Viggo Mortensen. (See box.) (2 hrs. 59 mins.; PG-13) • Opens 12/18.

Maid in Manhattan
Romantic comedy of errors starring Jennifer Lopez as a New York City chambermaid mistaken for a socialite by an aspiring senator (Ralph Fiennes). Directed by *The Joy Luck Club*'s Wayne Wang. (1 hr. 42 mins.; PG-13) • Opens 12/13.

Now You Know
Veteran Kevin Smith actor Jeff Anderson directed this comedy about a fiancée (Rashida Jones) who cancels her wedding as the groom's bachelor party is about to begin. (1 hr. 42 mins.; R) • Opens 12/13.

Russian Ark
See Rainer, page 60. In Russian, with English subtitles. (1 hr. 36 mins.; NR) • Opens 12/13.

Star Trek Nemesis
Patrick Stewart and the crew of the U.S.S. *Enterprise* resume their roles in this tenth *Star Trek* film; this time, they all battle the Romulans, who are led by a Captain Picard clone. Directed by Stuart Baird. (See box.) (1 hr. 57 mins.; PG-13) • Opens 12/13.

REVIEWS BY BILGE EBIRI

Now Playing

Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights
Adam Sandler gets animated, as a drunken lout who slowly learns to change his ways. A virtual encyclopedia of cheap sentiment and crude humor, with none of Sandler's considerable live-action gifts to make it worthwhile. (1 hr. 11 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 7; 12; 13; 14; 15; 29; 32; 39; 40; 41; 42; 47; 49; 53; 54; 56; 57; 58; 59; 61; 65; 67; 68; 69; 70; 72.

★ Adaptation
The latest collaboration from director Spike Jonze and screenwriter Charlie Kaufman, who made *Being John Malkovich*, is a wildly original comedy starring Nicolas Cage in a dual role as Charlie Kaufman, a sorry-faced screenwriter trying to adapt Susan Orlean's nonfiction book *The Orchid Thief* and getting nowhere, and his crass brother Donald, who decides he wants to be a screenwriter, too. Meryl Streep plays Orlean; Chris Cooper is the eponymous orchid poacher. All the actors are in top form. (Rainer; 12/2/02) (1 hr. 52 mins.; R) • 6; 15; 39.

Analyze That
See Rainer, page 60. (1 hr. 35 mins.; R) • 1; 7; 12; 13; 14; 15; 25; 32; 34; 39; 41; 42; 46; 47; 48; 49; 50; 53; 56; 58; 59; 61; 64; 65; 68; 69; 70; 71; 72.

Ararat
Ambitious portrait of the Armenian genocide of the early twentieth century is less about history than its present-day resonance throughout the Armenian diaspora, focusing primarily on happenings around a modern-day film about the event. Often fascinating, but a less aloof style might have more emotional impact. Co-starring Charles Aznavour; directed by Atom Egoyan. (1 hr. 55 mins.; R) • 2; 30; 39; 60.

Blackboards
Oddly hypnotic, fairy-tale-like story of teachers wandering around Iranian Kurdistan with blackboards on their back, looking for pupils while trying to survive. Very symbolic, elliptical film will try some viewers, but there's no mistaking its originality and confidence. Directed by Samira Makhmalbaf. (1 hr. 25 mins.; NR) • 87.

★ Bloody Sunday
Paul Greengrass's stunning movie is perhaps the best filmed dramatization of civil war since Gillo Pontecorvo's *Battle of Algiers*. It takes place in one day—January 30, 1972—when British soldiers shot dead thirteen unarmed civilians taking part in a civil-rights march. James Nesbitt gives an extraordinary performance as the Protestant pol who organizes the march and is broken by its consequences. (Rainer; 10/7/02) (1 hr. 50 mins.; R) • 4.

★ Bowling for Columbine
Michael Moore explores the culture of violence and guns in America. It's a film that needs to be seen. (2 hrs. 5 mins.; R) • 6; 12; 15; 36; 43.

★ Comedian
This documentary by Christian Charles mostly follows Jerry Seinfeld around as he puts together a brand-new stand-up act. The film is a fascinating chronicle of how comics do their thing. (Rainer; 10/21/02) (1 hr. 19 mins.; NR) • 8; 18; 23; 62.

Die Another Day
Pierce Brosnan in another tour of duty as 007. Formulaic and fairly exciting, with the usual supply of Aston Martins and Halle Berry in a bikini. In this one, Bond gets tortured by the North Koreans and battles the usual billionaire who wants to control the world. (Rainer; 11/25/02) (2 hrs. 3 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 9; 11; 13; 14; 21; 22; 27; 29; 34; 37; 38; 40; 41; 42; 45; 46; 47; 48; 49; 50; 51; 52; 53; 54; 56; 58; 59; 61; 63; 66; 67; 68; 69; 70; 71; 72.

★ 8 Mile
Curtis Hanson's movie starring Eminem as a Detroit hip-hop artist in 1995 is geared up to be an anthem for making the right choices in life, but luckily, its real subject is the euphoria that talent can bring. Eminem isn't a trained actor, but he holds the screen anyway. The script is uneven, but even the clichés about finding one's true voice have a pleasing, almost Depression-era innocence to them. At its best, the film is one of the year's sweetest joyrides. (Rainer; 11/4/02) (1 hr. 51 mins.; R) • 1; 9; 10; 13; 14; 21; 27; 37; 38; 40; 41; 42; 47; 49; 53; 54; 56; 58; 59; 66; 67; 70; 72.

El Crimen del Padre Amaro
A young priest (Gael García Bernal) has to face his passionate love for a girl (Ana Claudia Talancon) while also contending with the corruption he sees among his fellow priests. The melodramatic film suffers from bland

Ground Rules These synopses, where noted, are condensed versions of reviews by Peter Rainer. Stars (★) denote releases that *New York* recommends, ranging from best-of-the-year picks to worthy curios to flawed movies with one outstanding element. **NOTE: Each review is followed by numbers indicating theaters where the film is playing; a key to theaters begins on page 70.**

PHOTOGRAPH BY BARRY WETCHER.

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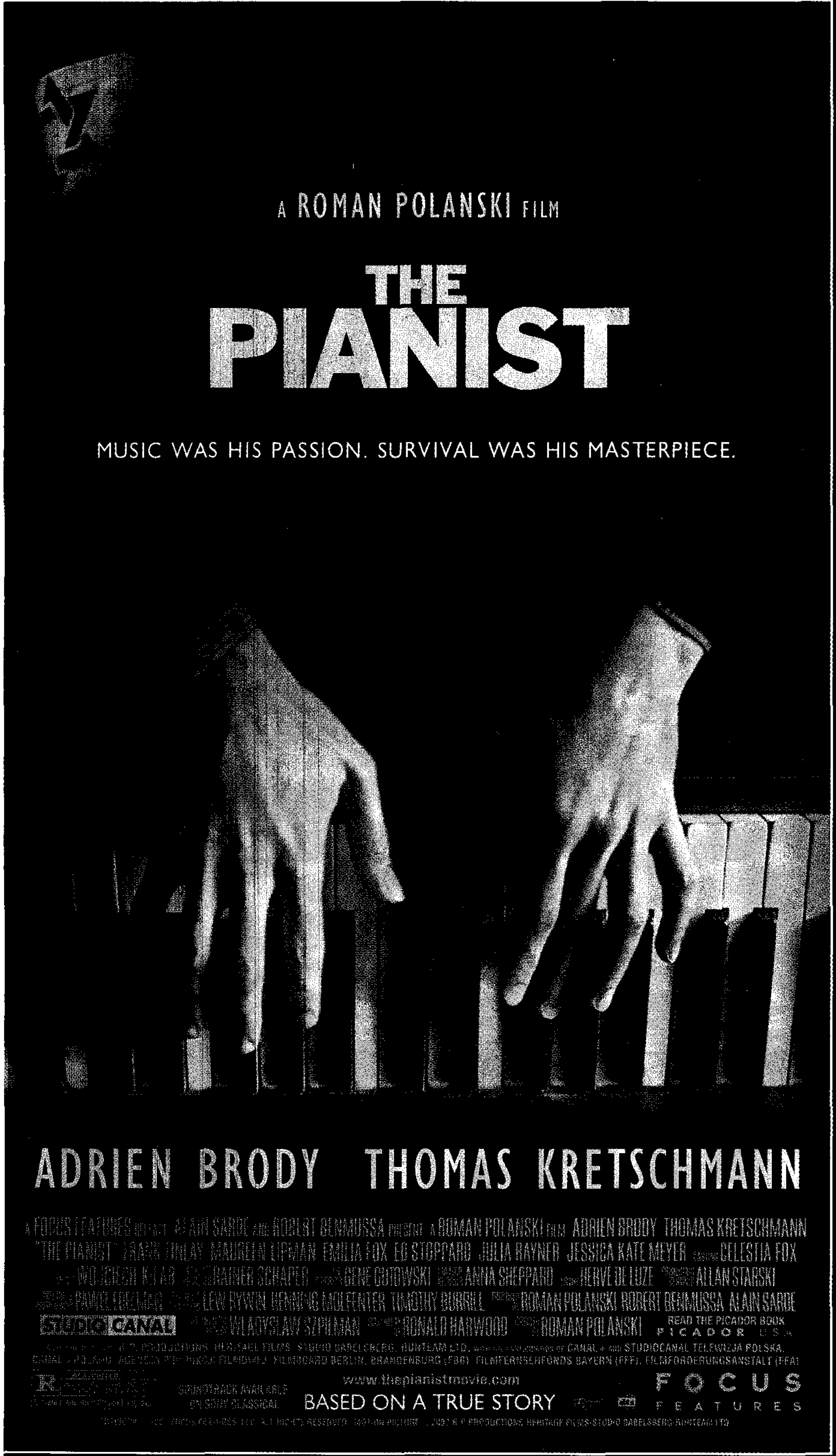
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direction and ridiculous plotting, despite some fine performances. (2 hrs.; R) • 2; 15; 17; 60.

The Emperor's Club

Kevin Kline plays an inspirational classics teacher who finds his usual charms powerless against a senator's spoiled son (Emile Hirsch). Kline does his best with a part requiring much talk but little insight, in a film with unfortunate resemblances to *Dead Poets Society*. Becomes simultaneously more ridiculous and more interesting in its final reel—but it's too little, too late.(1 hr. 45 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 7; 14; 15; 25; 26; 39; 53; 67; 70.

Empire

A South Bronx drug lord (John Leguizamo) tries to go legit after discovering the joys of making money on Wall Street, thanks to a slimy hotshot investment banker (Peter Sarsgaard). Leguizamo's performance is convincing at times, but he's hampered by a rote script full of second-rate gangster-movie posturing, plus some gaping plot holes. (1 hr. 38 mins.; R) • 1; 3; 13; 15; 16; 29; 37; 38; 41; 42; 45; 47; 49; 52; 53; 57; 58; 59; 63; 67; 70.

Equilibrium

Christian Bale fights the power in writer Kurt (*Tomorrow Never Dies*) Wimmer's directorial debut; a sci-fi action film about a futuristic world where emotion has been outlawed by the government. With Emily Watson and Taye Diggs. (1 hr. 47 mins.; R) • 3; 13; 14; 18; 21; 37; 42; 49; 55; 58; 72.

Étoiles: Dancers of the Paris Opera Ballet

A portrait of what may be the world's greatest ballet company, focusing on the dancers' drive and technique as well as their isolation and anxiety. (1 hr. 40 mins.; NR) • 4.

Extreme Ops

Devon Sawa and Bridgette Wilson-Sampras are daredevil skiers forced to confront a Serbian terrorist after their film crew captures him on tape. Directed by Christian (*Joan of Arc*) Duguay. (1 hr. 33 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 7; 12; 13; 14; 15; 29; 32; 39; 40; 42; 47; 49; 50; 52; 53; 55; 58; 59; 65; 70; 72.

★ Far From Heaven

Todd Haynes's movie is set in mid-fifties suburbia and stars Julianne Moore as a dutiful matron and Dennis Quaid as her sales-executive husband. The picture is an artful attempt to recreate the look and manner of a Douglas Sirk weepie while at the same time include issues of race and sex. Quaid's performance as a man incinerated with self-loathing is very strong, and Moore does a commendable job as the sacrificial caregiver—the woman left behind by her times. (Rainer; 11/4/02) (1 hr. 50 mins.; PG-13) • 2; 10; 28; 31; 36; 43; 60; 72.

Frida

Salma Hayek stars as the famous unibrowed Mexican artist who was married to Diego Rivera, played here by Alfred Molina. Hayek is a bundle of energy, but her torridness has few emotional levels. Director Julie Taymor pulls off some magical visual moments, but most of her work is disappointingly conventional. (Rainer; 10/28/02) (2 hrs. 2 mins.; R) • 1; 2; 12; 14; 15; 25; 30; 39; 44; 46; 55; 72.

Friday After Next

Third film in the *Friday* series has Craig (Ice Cube) and Day-Day (Mike Epps) back in the 'hood, working as security guards after getting robbed by a thief dressed up as Santa Claus. Plotless comedy can't hold a candle to the original *Friday* but manages to sneak in a few tried-and-true gags during the inevitable climactic party sequence. (1 hr. 27 mins.; R) • 1; 7; 13; 14; 15; 29; 38; 39; 40; 41; 42; 47; 49; 52; 53; 56; 58; 59; 65; 67; 70.

God Is Great, I'm Not

A young model (Audrey Tautou) searching for meaning hooks up with a cagey, self-hating Jewish veterinarian (Edouard Baer) and becomes obsessed with his religion, much to his comic displeasure. Lighthearted, Woody Allen–esque romance works reasonably well as a study of two troubled souls learning to tolerate each other, not so well as an exercise in empty stylization. In French, with English subtitles. (1 hr. 35 mins.; NR) • 18.

Half Past Dead

Seal-shaped undercover agent Steven Seagal and criminal pal Ja Rule get sent to a refurbished Alcatraz. Turgid mess of an action flick is sloppy and silly, even by Seagal's low, low standards. (1 hr. 39 mins.; PG-13) • 15; 40; 41; 47; 49; 53; 58; 65.

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets

The next installment in the *Harry Potter* movie series is marginally better than the first outing—it's speedier and darker. But Chris Columbus, directing once again, is too literal-minded and unimaginative to bring out the entrancements in the J. K. Rowling material. The Rowling books remain greater visual experiences than the movies that are made from them. (Rainer; 11/11/02) (2 hrs. 40 mins.; PG) • 1; 9; 10; 13; 14; 16; 21; 29; 35; 38; 39; 40; 41; 42; 44; 46; 47; 49; 50; 52; 53; 54; 56; 57; 58; 59; 61; 65; 67; 68; 69; 70; 71; 72.

★ Hell House

A portrait of a Halloween "haunted house," created by a church organization in Texas, that's basically a chamber of horrors designed to warn children away from the sins on display—including abortion, drinking and driving, and rape. Mesmerizing, surprisingly touching documentary. (1 hr. 25 mins.; NR) • 4.

★ Jackass: The Movie

Actually, there *is* something viscerally entertaining about a guy pole vaulting into sewage, or letting a baby alligator bite his nipple. (1 hr. 27 mins.; R) • 9.

Massoud, the Afghan

French documentarian Christophe de Ponfilly followed Afghan resistance hero Ahmad Shah Massoud. But De Ponfilly's footage seems too abbreviated (and doting) to give much insight into Massoud. What we're left with are some indelible images of Afghanistan, and little else. (1 hr. 30 mins.; NR) • 5.

Mostly Martha

An obsessive chef (Martina Gedeck) finds her life unraveling when her young niece (Maxime Foerste) moves in and an Italian takes over her restaurant's kitchen. Gains power and charm thanks to Gedeck's nuanced performance. (1 hr. 47 mins.; PG) • 8.

My Big Fat Greek Wedding

Innocuous comedy about the thirtysomething Toula, who is getting too old to marry, at least by her Greek family's standards. When a decidedly un-Greek Mr. Right (John Corbett) enters her life, things get even worse. (1 hr. 59 mins.; PG) • 1; 3; 15; 27; 39; 59; 60; 68; 72.

★ Personal Velocity

Three women reflect on their pasts at critical moments in their lives: An abused wife (Kyra Sedgwick) leaves her husband; an ambitious editor (Parker Posey) contends with an extramarital affair; a troubled girl (Fairuza Balk) helps a mysterious runaway. The immediacy of director Rebecca Miller's visual style and the lovely performances make this worth watching. (1 hr. 26 mins.; R) • 2; 27; 43.

Power and Terror: Noam Chomsky in Our Times

Talky documentary follows MIT professor and leftist icon Noam Chomsky around as he discusses the terrorism of the powerful in a post-9/11 world. For converts only. (1 hr. 14 mins.; NR) • 5.

★ Punch-Drunk Love

Paul Thomas Anderson's movie stars Adam Sandler as a dweeb in a fight with a phone-sex outfit and in love with a woman, played by Emily Watson, remarkably unconcerned with his baggage. Anderson wants us to see the fury coiled inside the mildness, but there's a lack of human conviction to this genuinely odd movie that keeps it from fully connecting with us. (Rainer; 10/14/02) (1 hr. 29 mins.; R) • 9.

★ Rabbit-Proof Fence

Three young Aborigine girls, whisked away by the Australian government to be trained as housekeepers for white families, escape from internment and flee across the desert. Surprisingly poetic film, based on a true story, avoids the usual hysterics and presents an otherworldly portrait of human determination in a desperate, haunting landscape. Directed by Phillip (*The Quiet American*) Noyce. (1 hr. 35 mins.; PG) • 6; 24.

Real Women Have Curves

A young Hispanic girl (America Ferrera) goes to work with her bickering but loving mom (Lupe Ontiveros) in a garment factory, where her headstrong ways clash with the more traditional co-workers. Film tackles ethnicity, weight, and self-esteem issues with no subtlety, but Ferrera and Ontiveros are still a joy to watch. (1 hr. 25 mins.; PG-13) • 15; 36; 50; 60; 62.

The Ring

Naomi Watts stars in Gore Verbinski's remake of a Japanese horror film about a haunted videotape; its viewers wind up dead seven days after seeing the film. (1 hr. 55 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 9; 13; 14; 21; 38; 40; 41; 42; 47; 49; 50; 53; 56; 58; 59; 66; 67; 70.

The Santa Clause 2

Sequel to 1994 family hit has Tim Allen, now firmly established as Santa Claus, leaving the North Pole to look for a wife. The convoluted storyline feels like 60 people helped write it. (1 hr. 45 mins.; G) • 15; 38; 40; 42; 53; 54; 56; 58; 59; 67; 69; 70; 71; 72.

Secretary

James Spader plays a heavily uptight lawyer and Maggie Gyllenhaal the secretary who lures him into S&M in this naughty trifle with Buñuelian pretensions. Spader enunciates every syllable as if speech itself were a form of S&M. (Rainer; 9/23/02) (1 hr. 51 mins.; R) • 3; 62.

Opening

Final Frontier?

"It became incestuous," says director Stuart Baird of the 37-year-old franchise he's been hired to refuel in **Star Trek Nemesis**, rumored to be the final mission of the U.S.S. *Enterprise*. With a script from *Gladiator* Oscar nominee John Logan that puts Captain Picard (Patrick Stewart) face-to-face with an evil replica of himself, Baird says the new film is "edgier and darker than the rest." Baird, best known for editing films like the Who's *Tommy* and *Superman* and directing *U.S. Marshals*, admits he's no Trekkie, but hopes he's managed to make a movie for that crowd as well as for everyone else. "I had to work within the parameters of *Star Trek*," he says. "It's really like a Bond picture—you walk into their family, the architecture is set, then you roll up your sleeves and get to work." Opens December 13.

BATTLEBOTS: Brent Spiner plays Data, twice, as the *Enterprise*'s android is knocked off by the Romulans in *Star Trek Nemesis*.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SAM EMERSON BRENT.

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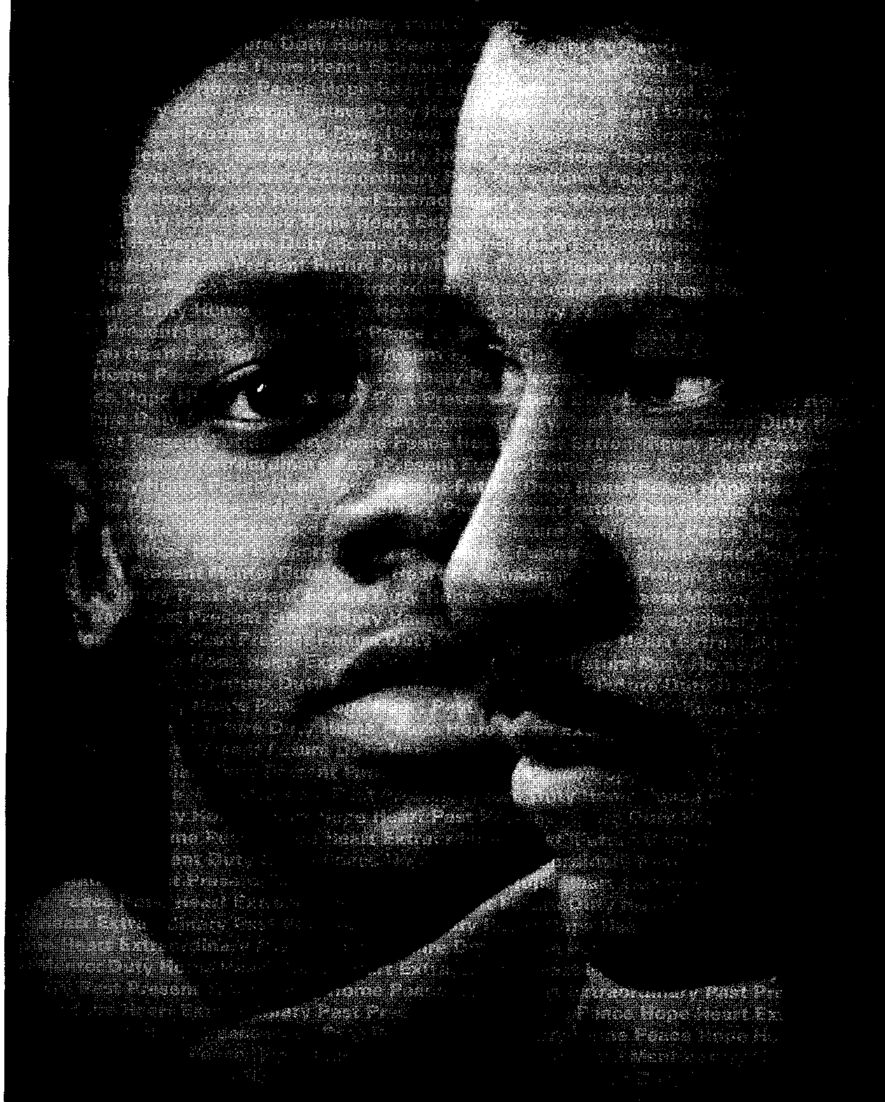

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Shanghai Ghetto
Documentary about the plight of European Jews who fled Nazism and made their way to Shanghai. Inherently engaging topic is given the standard talking-heads treatment, resulting in a worthwhile, if visually uninteresting, film. (1 hr. 40 mins.; NR) • 62.

Solaris
George Clooney plays Chris Kelvin, a psychologist sent into outer space to investigate a ship that has lost contact with Earth. Remake of Andrei Tarkovsky's 1972 existentialist thriller. Directed by Steven (*Traffic*) Soderbergh; co-starring Natascha McElhone. (1 hr. 35 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 9; 10; 13; 14; 15; 20; 25; 27; 33; 35; 40; 47; 50; 53; 56; 59; 64; 65; 68; 69; 70; 72.

★ Spirited Away
A marvelously lyrical and disturbing animated feature from Japan about a 10-year-old girl's adventures in a fantasyland that owes much to Grimm and Lewis Carroll and yet is wholly the filmmaker's own. (Rainer; 10/7/02) (2 hrs. 2 mins.; PG) • 3.

★ Standing in the Shadows of Motown
Valuable but slightly uneven look at the unsung, underpaid session musicians known as the Funk Brothers, who played on the early Motown hits. Incorporates interviews, flashbacks, and—most effectively—new performances featuring singers such as Ben Harper. (1 hr. 42 mins.; PG) • 3; 23; 27.

★ Talk to Her
Pedro Almodóvar's movie affects some people very deeply, while others, like myself, find it to be high-grade kitsch. It's about two men, well played by Javier Camara and Dario Grandinetti, who each tend to their respective women who lie irreversibly comatose in a clinic. The women, one a ballet student (Leonor Watling) and the other a bullfighter (Rosario Flores), still manage to elicit feelings of love and tenderness from the men. (Rainer; 11/25/02) (1 hr. 56 mins.; R) • 6; 10; 36.

Treasure Planet
Disney updates Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* into this futuristic tale of an unlucky young adventurer seeking a legendary stash of loot. Visually stunning film seems at times like an overearnest, expensive *Futurama* episode. (1 hr. 36 mins.; PG) • 1; 3; 13; 14; 15; 16; 29; 37; 39; 40; 41; 42; 45; 46; 48; 49; 50; 51; 52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 58; 59; 61; 63; 65; 68; 69; 70; 71; 72.

★ The Trials of Henry Kissinger
Eugene Jarecki's documentary lays out a case against Kissinger based on his involvement in nefarious doings in Vietnam, Cambodia, East Timor and Chile. Powerfully muckraking. (Rainer; 9/23/02) (2 hrs. 7 mins.; NR) • 5; 85.

Premiere

The Frank Whaley Show

"I never wanted to be famous," says Frank Whaley, who, after roles in *Born on the Fourth of July*, *Swimming With Sharks*, and *Pulp Fiction* (that's his Big Kahuna burger Samuel L. Jackson eats before his high-octane sermon), seemed to be headed that way in spite of himself. Then, in 1999, he wrote and directed *Joe the King*, a dark Sundance winner about an abused boy, and caught the directing bug. "I think I was meant to do my own thing," he says in a Chelsea coffee shop near his home. We're here to talk about his second film, **The Jimmy Show**, where he plays an oft-unemployed father whose dreams of becoming a comic blind him to his crumbling marriage. "We shot for 21 days on Staten Island in the cold. I never slept; my wife told me I was crying in my sleep. I lost twenty pounds, and it was the greatest creative experience of my life." Opens December 13.

TAKE MY LIFE, PLEASE: Frank Whaley is dying, onstage and off, as the title character in *The Jimmy Show*.

★ The Way Home
A bratty young boy goes to live with his frail, mute grandmother in her remote shack. Predictably, his ignorance and attitude conflict with the way the poor old lady does things. Director Lee Jung-hyang expertly (and shamelessly) jerks every possible tear out of her viewers' ducts. (1 hr. 25 mins.; PG) • 60; 87.

Wes Craven Presents: They
The director of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* returns to bad dreams, this time producing director Robert (*The Hitcher*) Harmon's scary movie about a haunted graduate student who discovers that bad dreams do come true. (1 hr. 30 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 9; 13; 14; 21; 29; 37; 38; 40; 42; 47; 49; 50; 53; 55; 57; 58; 59; 69; 70; 72.

Manhattan

Below 14th Street

1. Battery Park City Cinema
102 North End Ave. (212-945-3418) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; The Emperor's Club; Empire; Extreme Ops; Frida; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; The Ring; Solaris; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

2. CC Angelika Film Center
18 W. Houston St. (212-995-2000) • Ararat; El Crimen del Padre Amaro; Far From Heaven; Frida; Personal Velocity

3. CC Village East
189 Second Ave. (212-529-6799) • Empire; Equilibrium; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; Secretary; Spirited Away; Standing in the Shadows of Motown; Treasure Planet

4. Cinema Village
22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363) • Auto Focus; Bloody Sunday; Dead or Alive: Final; Étoiles: Dancers of the Paris Opera Ballet; Hell House (see also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

5. Film Forum
209 W. Houston St. (212-727-8110) • Massoud, the Afghan; Power and Terror: Noam Chomsky in Our Times; The Trials of Henry Kissinger (see also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

6. Landmark Sunshine Cinema
143 E. Houston St. (212-358-7709) • Adaptation; Bowling for Columbine; Rabbit-Proof Fence; Talk to Her (see also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

7. Loews Village
66 Third Ave. (212-50-LOEWS#952) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; The Emperor's Club; Extreme Ops; Friday After Next

8. The Screening Room
54 Varick St. (212-334-2100) • Comedian; Mostly Martha (see also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

9. UA Union Square
13th St. and Broadway (212-253-2225) • Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Jackass: The Movie; Punch-Drunk Love; The Ring; Solaris; Wes Craven Presents: They

14th–41st Streets

10. Clearview's Chelsea
260 W. 23rd St. (212-777-FILM#597) • 8 Mile; Far From Heaven; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Solaris; Talk to Her

11. Clearview's Chelsea West
333 W. 23rd St. (212-777-FILM#614) • Die Another Day

12. Loews 19th St. East
890 Broadway, at 19th St. (212-50-LOEWS#858) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Bowling for Columbine; Extreme Ops; Frida

13. Loews 34th St. Theatre
312 W. 34th St. (212-244-8850) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Empire; Equilibrium; Extreme Ops; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Ring; Solaris; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

14. Loews Kips Bay Theatre
550 Second Ave., at 32nd St. (212-50-LOEWS#558) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; The Emperor's Club; Equilibrium; Extreme Ops; Frida; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Ring; Solaris; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

42nd–60th Streets

15. AMC Empire 25 Theatres
234 W. 42nd St. (212-398-3939) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Adaptation; Analyze That; Bowling for Columbine; El Crimen del Padre Amaro; The Emperor's Club; Empire; Extreme Ops; Frida; Friday After Next; Half Past Dead; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; Real Women Have Curves; The Santa Clause 2; Solaris; Treasure Planet

16. CC Cinemas 1, 2, 3
1001 Third Ave., at 60th St. (212-753-6022) • Empire; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Treasure Planet

17. CC Eastside Playhouse
919 Third Ave., nr. 55th St. (212-755-3020) • El Crimen del Padre Amaro

18. CC Sutton
205 E. 57th St. (212-759-1411) • Comedian; Equilibrium; God Is Great, I'm Not

19. Clearview's 59th Street East
239 E. 59th St. (212-777-FILM#615) • Roger Dodger

20. Clearview's Ziegfeld
141 W. 54th St. (212-777-FILM#602) • Solaris

21. Loews 42nd Street E Walk
42nd St. at Eighth Ave. (212-50-LOEWS#572) • Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Equilibrium; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Ring; Wes Craven Presents: They

22. Loews Astor Plaza
44th St. at Eighth Ave. (212-50-LOEWS#699) • Die Another Day

23. Loews State
1540 Broadway, nr. 45th St. (212-50-LOEWS#901) • Comedian; Ghost Ship; Standing in the Shadows of Motown

24. Paris Theatre
4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800) • Rabbit-Proof Fence

61st Street and Above, East Side

25. CC 86th St. East
210 E. 86th St. (212-777-FILM#763) • Analyze That; The Emperor's Club; Frida; Solaris

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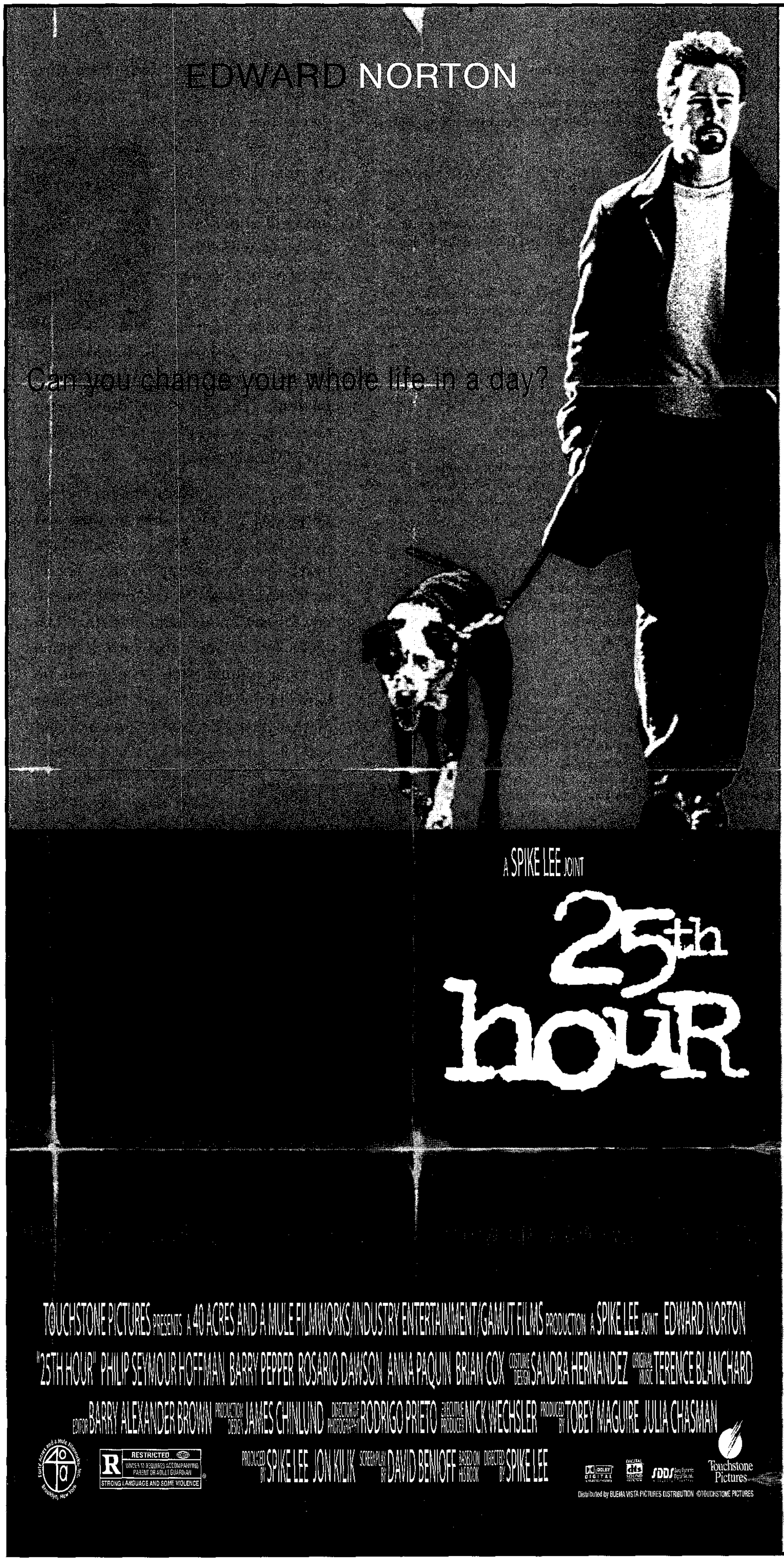
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EXCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENTS BEGIN DECEMBER 19

26. Clearview's Beekman
1254 Second Ave., nr. 65th St. (212-777-FILM#606) • The Emperor's Club

27. Clearview's First & 62nd St.
400 E. 62nd St. (212-777-FILM#957) • Die Another Day; 8 Mile; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; Personal Velocity; Solaris; Standing in the Shadows of Motown

28. Loews 72nd St. East
1230 Third Ave., nr. 72nd St. (212-50-LOEWS#704) • Far From Heaven

29. Loews Orpheum 7
1538 Third Ave., at 86th St. (212-50-LOEWS#964) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Die Another Day; Empire; Extreme Ops; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

30. New York Twin
1271 Second Ave., nr. 66th St. (212-505-CINE#590) • Ararat; Frida

31. UA East
1629 First Ave., at 85th St. (212-249-5100) • Far From Heaven

32. UA Gemini
1210 Second Ave., at 64th St. (212-832-1670) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Extreme Ops

61st Street and Above, West Side

33. Clearview's 62nd and Broadway
1871 Broadway, at 62nd St. (212-777-FILM#864) • Solaris

34. Clearview's Metro Cinema
2626 Broadway, nr. 99th St. (212-777-FILM#609) • Analyze That; Die Another Day

35. Clearview's Olympia
2770 Broadway, nr. 106th St. (212-777-FILM#613) • Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Solaris

36. Lincoln Plaza Cinemas
30 Lincoln Plaza, on Broadway nr. 62nd St. (212-757-2280) • Bowling for Columbine; Far From Heaven; Real Women Have Curves; Talk to Her

37. Loews 84th Street
2310 Broadway, at 84th St. (212-50-LOEWS#701) • Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Empire; Equilibrium; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

38. Magic Johnson Harlem USA
300 W. 125th St. (212-665-8733) • Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Empire; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Ring; The Santa Clause 2; Wes Craven Presents: They

39. Sony Lincoln Square
1998 Broadway, at 68th St. (212-50-LOEWS#638) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Adaptation; Analyze That; Ararat; The Emperor's Club; Extreme Ops; Frida; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; Treasure Planet

Bronx

40. Bay Plaza
2210 Bartow Ave., behind Bay Plaza Mall (718-777-FILM#833) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Extreme Ops; Friday After Next; Half Past Dead; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Ring; The Santa Clause 2; Solaris; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

41. Concourse Plaza
214 E. 161st St. (718-588-8800) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Empire; Friday After Next; Half Past Dead; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Ring; Treasure Planet

42. Whitestone
2505 Bruckner Blvd., at Hutchinson River Pkwy. (718-409-9030) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Empire; Equilibrium; Extreme Ops; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Ring; The Santa Clause 2; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

Brooklyn

43. BAM Rose Cinemas
30 Lafayette Ave. (718-623-2770) • Bowling for Columbine; Far From Heaven; Personal Velocity (see also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

44. Brooklyn Heights Pavilion
70 Henry St. (718-369-0838) • Frida; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets

45. Canarsie
9310 Ave. L, at E. 93rd St. (718-251-0700) • Die Another Day; Empire; Treasure Planet

46. Cobble Hill Cinema
265 Court St. (718-596-9113) • Analyze That; Die Another Day; Frida; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Treasure Planet

47. Court Street 14
106 Court St. (718-246-7469) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Empire; Extreme Ops; Friday After Next; Half Past Dead; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Ring; Solaris; Wes Craven Presents: They

48. Kent Triplex
Coney Island Ave. at Ave. H (718-338-3371) • Analyze That; Die Another Day; Treasure Planet

49. Linden Boulevard Multiplex
Linden Blvd. and Eldert Lane (718-277-0303) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Empire; Equilibrium; Extreme Ops; Friday After Next; Half Past Dead; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Ring; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

50. Pavilion
188 Prospect Park West (718-369-0838) • Analyze That; Die Another Day; Extreme Ops; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Real Women Have Curves; The Ring; Solaris; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

51. Pavilion Flatbush
314 Flatbush Ave. (718-596-7070) • Die Another Day; Treasure Planet

52. Ridgewood
55-27 Myrtle Ave., at Putnam Ave. (718-821-5993) • Die Another Day; Empire; Extreme Ops; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Treasure Planet

53. UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay
3907 Shore Pkwy., off Exit 9 at Belt Pkwy. (718-615-1700) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; The Emperor's Club; Empire; Extreme Ops; Friday After Next; Half Past Dead; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Ring; The Santa Clause 2; Solaris; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

Queens

54. Centre Sunnyside
42-17 Queens Blvd. (718-361-6869) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Jonah: A VeggieTales Movie; The Santa Clause 2; Treasure Planet

55. Cinemart
106-03 Metropolitan Ave., at 72nd Rd., Forest Hills (718-261-2244) • Equilibrium; Extreme Ops; Frida; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

56. College Point Multiplex
28-55 Ulmer St., Whitestone (718-886-4900) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Ring; The Santa Clause 2; Solaris; Treasure Planet

57. Jackson Triplex
82nd St. at Roosevelt Ave. (718-478-6777) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Empire; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Wes Craven Presents: They

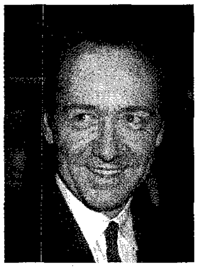
58. Jamaica Multiplex Cinema
1 Jamaica Center, at Jamaica Ave. and Parsons Blvd. (718-291-9400) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Empire; Equilibrium; Extreme Ops; Friday After Next; Half Past Dead; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Ring; The Santa Clause 2; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

59. Kaufman Astoria Cinema
38th St. at 35th Ave. (718-786-2020) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Empire; Extreme Ops; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; The Ring; The Santa Clause 2; Solaris; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

60. Kew Gardens Cinemas
81-05 Lefferts Blvd. (718-441-9835) • Ararat; El Crimen

WHAT ABOUT BOB? **Robert De Niro** (whose *Analyze That* hit theaters last week) has signed on for yet another killer role. In *Rule Number Three*, he'll star as an everyday guy and undercover assassin who takes matters into his own hands when a high-powered arms tycoon decides to mess with him. **Robert Kuhn** (*Mickey Blue Eyes*) wrote the script; **Rob Bowman** (*The X-Files* and the unfortunate *Reign of Fire*) is in talks to direct; Fox 2000 will distribute.

PLAYING DOCTOR **Keanu Reeves** is in negotiations to join **Diane Keaton** and *About Schmidt* star **Jack Nicholson** in the next project from *What Women Want* director **Nancy Meyers**. The romantic comedy focuses on an aging man (that'd be Jack) whose romance with a much younger woman is disrupted when he lands in the hospital and falls for her mother (that'd be Diane); Reeves would play his doctor. Columbia will distribute; production is scheduled to kick off early next year in New York City.



THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS **Kevin Spacey** has a new project in the works: the film adaptation of **Ben Mezrich**'s book *Bringing Down the House: The Inside Story of Six M.I.T. Students Who Took Vegas for Millions*. Spacey will produce via his own Trigger Street Productions and is rumored to be interested in the role of the onetime professor who masterminded the plan. MGM will distribute.

FALLON INTO FAVOR *Saturday Night Live* star **Jimmy Fallon** (of *Weekend Update* fame) has signed on for his first starring role, in Miramax's adaptation of the popular French film *Tanguy*. In the comedy—the original was nominated for two Césars in 2001—he'll play a slacker in his late twenties whose parents are forced to take drastic measures when they realize he's never going to move out. Fallon's other screen credits include a minor role in *Almost Famous* and a small part in **Woody Allen**'s upcoming *Anything Else*. SARA CARDACE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBIN PLATZER/TWIN IMAGES.

del Padre Amaro; Far From Heaven; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; Real Women Have Curves; The Way Home

61. Main Street Cinemas
72-66 Main St. (718-263-4828) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Treasure Planet

62. North Shore Towers
27-10 Grand Central Pkwy., Floral Park (718-229-7702) • Comedian; Real Women Have Curves; Secretary; Shanghai Ghetto

63. Plaza
103-14 Roosevelt Ave., at 103rd St., Corona (718-639-0012) • Die Another Day; Empire; Treasure Planet

64. UA Brandon Cinema
70-20 Austin St., Forest Hills (718-544-1020) • Analyze That; Solaris

65. UA Crossbay II
92-10 Rockaway Blvd., at 93rd St., Ozone Park (718-641-5330) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Extreme Ops; Friday After Next; Half Past Dead; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Solaris; Treasure Planet

66. UA Crossbay III
94-11 Rockaway Blvd., at Woodhaven Blvd., Ozone Park (718-848-1738) • Die Another Day; 8 Mile; The Ring

67. UA Midway
108-22 Queens Blvd., at 71st Ave., Forest Hills (718-544-5545) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; The Emperor's Club; Empire; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Ring; The Santa Clause 2

68. UA Movieworld
242-02 61st Ave., off Exit 31, Douglaston (718-423-7200) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; Solaris; Treasure Planet

Staten Island

69. Atrium
680 Arthur Kill Rd., nr. Richmond Ave., Eltingville (718-317-8300) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Santa Clause 2; Solaris; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

70. Staten Island Stadium 16
2474 Forest Ave. (718-273-4200) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; The Emperor's Club; Empire; Extreme Ops; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Ring; The Santa Clause 2; Solaris; Solaris; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

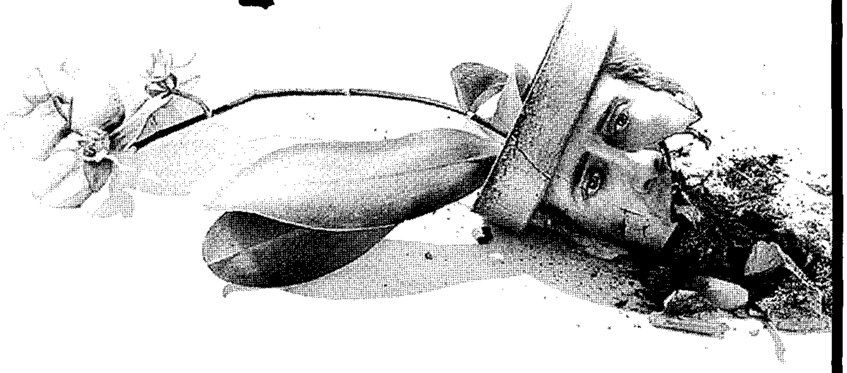
71. UA Hylan Plaza
107 Mill Rd., at Hylan Blvd., New Dorp (718-351-0805) • Analyze That; Die Another Day; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Santa Clause 2; Treasure Planet

72. UA Movies at Staten Island
141 E. Service Rd., at Victory Blvd., Travis (718-983-9600) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Equilibrium; Extreme Ops; Far From Heaven; Frida; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; The Santa Clause 2; Solaris; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

Museums, Societies, Etc.

73. American Museum of the Moving Image
36-01 35th Ave., Astoria (718-784-0077); $8.50. • "Directed by Martin Scorsese." 12/14: *Kundun* (1997); *Bringing Out the Dead* (1999). 12/15: *Casino* (1995). 12/21-12/22: *A Personal Journey With Martin Scorsese Through American Movies* (1995). 12/28-12/29: *My Voyage to Italy* (2001). "Pinewood Dialogue Preview Screenings." 12/15: *Narc* (2002). (Discussion with writer-director Joe Carnahan and stars Jason Patric and Ray Liotta.)

74. Ames Auditorium
111 E. 59 St. (Lighthouse International Building; 888-778-7575); $50 subscription fee for entire series. • "Monday Nights With Oscar." 12/9: *Hamlet* (1948). 1/13: *Gigi* (1958). 2/10: *Oliver* (1968). 3/10: *The Deer Hunter* (1978). 4/14: *Rain Man* (1988). 4/28: *Shakespeare in Love* (1998). 6/2: *Wings* (1928).



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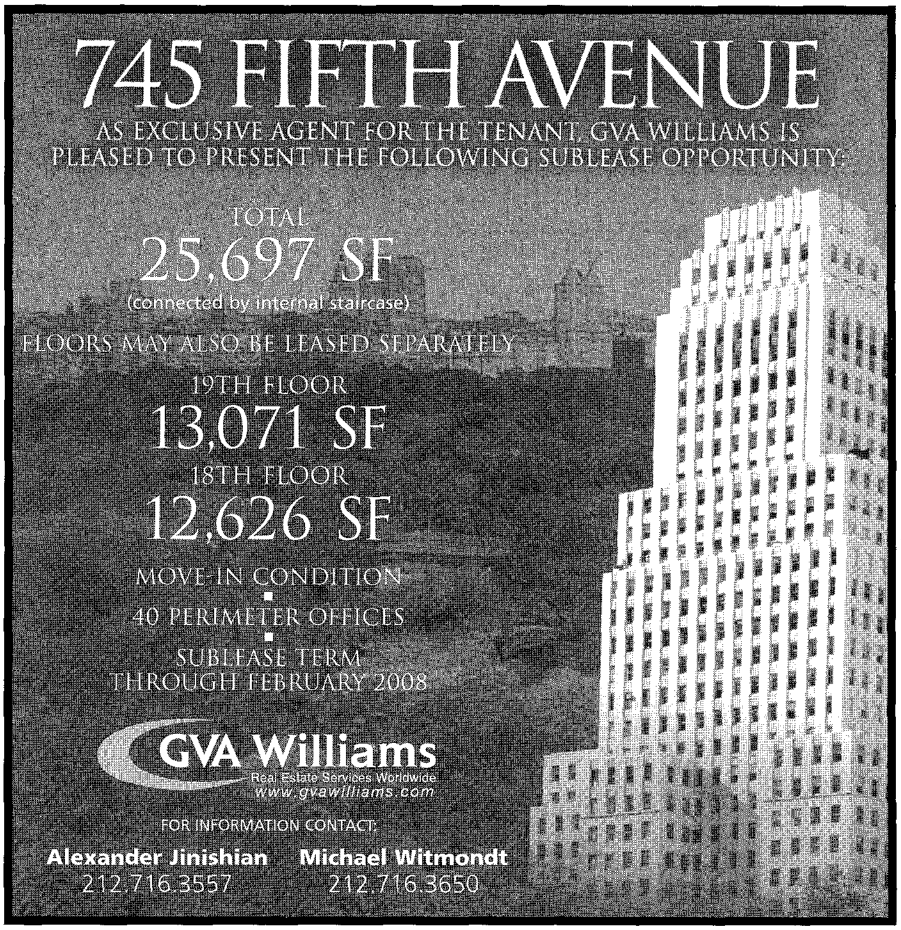

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75. Anthology Film Archives
32 Second Ave. (212-505-5110); $9. • 12/12-12/18: *On Snow's Wavelength, Zoom Out* (2001); *The Way Things Go* (1987); *Boom: The Sound of Eviction* (2001). 12/19: *Charlemagne 2: Piltzer* (2002); *Leon Polk Smith: Full Circle* (2001).

76. BAM Rose Cinemas
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100); $9. • "Two Masters of Russian Film: Dovzhenko and Tarkovsky." 12/12: *Ivan* (1932). 12/13-12/14: *Solaris* (1972). 12/15-12/16: *The Mirror* (1974). 12/17: *Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine* (1943). 12/18: *Stalker* (1979). 12/19: *Zvenigora* (1927).

77. Center for Jewish History
15 W. 16th St. (212-294-6170); $9. • "Seventh International Sephardic Film Festival." 12/11: *Egoz* (1999); *Taqasim* (1999). 12/12: *Farewell, My Island* (2002); *Anna's Summer* (2001); *Triumph of the Spirit* (1989). 12/14: *Once We Grow Up* (2000). 12/15: *Travels With My Brother* (1997); *Cinema Egypt* (2001); *X* (1997); *Day of Atonement 2* (1992). 12/16: *The Sephardic Jews and the Pike Place Market* (2001); *Side by Side* (1999); *The Last Jewish Town* (2000). 12/17: *Desperate Hours* (2001); *Once We Grow Up* (2000).

78. Cinema Village
22 E. 12th St. (212-505-7742); $9. • "36th NY EXPOsition of Short Film and Video." 12/11-12/12: (96 short animated, documentary, experimental, and narrative films from all over the world, including Russia, Iran, the Netherlands, and Central Park.)

79. Film Forum
209 W. Houston St. (212-727-8110); $9.75. • "Altman's 70s." 12/11-12/12: *The Long Goodbye* (1973); *M*A*S*H* (1970). 12/13-12/14: *Brewster McCloud* (1970). 12/15: *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (1971). 12/16: *A Wedding* (1978); *Quintent* (1979). 12/17-12/18: *California Split* (1974); *Buffalo Bill and the Indians* (1976). 12/19: *Thieves Like Us* (1974).

80. Film Society of Lincoln Center
65 W. 65th St., plaza level (212-875-5600); $9. • "Demons at High Noon: The Movie World of Alex De La Iglesia and Spanish Cinema Now." 12/11: *Mutant Action* (1992); *Day of the Beast* (1995). 12/12: *Warriors* (2002); *Poniente* (2002). 12/13: *Smoking Room* (2002); *The Shanghai Spell* (2002). 12/14: *Day of the Beast* (1995); *Warriors* (2002); *Smoking Room* (2002). 12/15: *Octavia* (2002); *Poniente* (2002); *The Shanghai Spell* (2002).

81. Instituto Cervantes
122 E. 42nd St., Suite 807 (212-689-4232); free. • "Nuestro Cine Presents: Recent Latin American Cinema." 12/11: *Cautiverio Feliz* (1998). 12/18: *Aguilas No Cazan Moscas* (1994).

82. Japan Society
333 E. 47th St. (212-832-1155); $11. • "Matsuri: Festivals in Japanese Cinema." 12/13: *A Festival of Dreams* (1989).

83. Landmark Sunshine Cinema
143 E. Houston St. (212-358-0576); $10. • "Midnight Movies." 12/13-12/14: *Office Space* (1999).

84. Location One
26 Greene St. (212-334-3347); free. • 12/11-12/28: *Letter From the Girl, Mailed at the Gas Station* (2002).

85. Makor
35 W. 67th St. (212-601-1000); $9. • 12/8: *The Wormhole* (2002). 12/11-12/12: *The Trials of Henry Kissinger* (2002). 12/23-12/26: *The Producers* (1968).

86. MoMA Film at the Gramercy Theatre
127 E. 23rd St. (212-777-4900); $12. • "Positif Champions: 50 Years of Cinema." 12/12: *Fargo* (1996); *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* (1959); *Cleo From 5 to 7* (1962); *Van Gogh* (1991). "Second Annual Festival of Non-Fiction Films." 12/13: *The Island of Lost Children* (2001); *Mothers of Life* (2002); *Corona* (2002); *From the Other Side* (2002). 12/14: *A Miner's Tale* (2001); *Habit* (2001); *South* (1999). 12/15: *This Is Not Living* (2001); *Family* (2001). 12/16: *Zapata's Garden* (2002); *Losing It* (2000); *The Inner Tour* (2001). 12/19: *The First 24 Hours* (2001); *Afghan Alphabet* (2002); *War and Peace* (2002).

87. Quad Cinema
34 W. 13th St. (1212-255-2243); $9. • "Dutch Treats 2002: New Films From Holland." 12/11: *Fatal Reaction: Moscow* (2000); *Drift* (2001); *Zus & Zo* (2001). 12/12: *Sleeping Rough* (2002); *Qui Vive* (2002); *Iles Flottantes* (2001).

88. Scandinavia House
Victor Borge Hall, 58 Park Ave., nr. 38th St. (212-779-3587); $8 • "Nordic Directors' Series: Directors From the Edge." (Iceland; Fridrik Fridriksson). 12/11: *Children of Nature* (1991). 12/18: *Movie Days* (1994).

89. Symphony Space/The Leonard Nimoy Thalia
2537 Broadway, at 95th St. (212-864-5400); $9. • 12/14-12/29: *Metropolis* (1927).

90. The J.C.C. in Manhattan
334 Amsterdam Ave., at 76th St. (646-505-5708); $12. • 12/12: *Secret Lives: Hidden Children and Their Rescuers During World War II* (2002). 12/19: *Max* (2002). (Sneak Preview Screening.)

91. The Screening Room
54 Varick St. (212-334-2100); $9.50. • "Kevin Kline: Salute to an Actor." 12/11: *Dave* (1993). 12/12: *The Ice Storm* (1997).

92. Two Boots Pioneer Theater
155 E. 3rd St. (212-254-3300); $5. • "The Den of December Divas." 12/16: *The Paul Lynde Christmas Special* (1977). 12/23: *Liza With a Z* (1972).

93. YWCA Cine-Club
610 Lexington Ave., at 53rd St. (212-735-9717); $7. • "The Cinema of Robert Bresson." 12/14-12/15: *Balthazar* (1966).

Spotlight

Ring of Fire

SAVIOR OF THE UNIVERSE: As Aragorn, Viggo Mortensen defends all that breathes in *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers.*

"We're in a dark time right now," says **Viggo Mortensen**, star of *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, the centerpiece in Peter Jackson's trilogy of J.R.R. Tolkien films. After eighteen months in New Zealand, the 44-year-old New Yorker seems wary about being home, and warier of war talk. "I may regret saying this, but what's going on is more important than a film." That Mortensen, an accomplished character actor and published poet and photographer, is the romantic lead in these blockbusters seems unlikely—his role will expand in Jackson's third film, where he plays the title character in *The Return of the King*—but his intensity brings plenty to the film. "I wasn't sure as an actor I could do this," he says, although once in New Zealand, Mortensen read Tolkien's canon, wore his costume off-set, and read up on Celtic myths. "I learned about the symbolic elements—the rituals and gestures that have a deeper meaning than what you see onscreen. I hate walking away from anything feeling like I didn't do my best." *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* opens December 18. B.K.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PIERRE VINET.

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LEVY *Continued from page 40*

smaller liberal-arts colleges that no one really wants to go to." Now she's on the Zone.

Ketosis can become just another way to rank ourselves, another opportunity for hierarchy in a city that can't get enough of it. "It's so troubling," says Kim France. "People think: *That was the way I used to be, and this is so* measurably *different. It must be better.*"

But is it?

"The interesting thing is that if you look at the heart-healthy diets, they're completely the opposite," says Jacobson-Sive. "I bought the book, and I didn't know where to begin." The book he's referring to is by Dr. Dean Ornish, a Harvard-educated scientist and the most vocal and visible Atkins opponent on the diet scene today. "The Atkins diet is based on a half-truth," Ornish says. "People do eat way too many simple carbohydrates. But the goal is not to go from simple carbs to bacon. It's to go from simple carbs to complex carbs like fruits and vegetables. It's a great way to sell books to tell people they can eat ice cream and sausage and pork rinds, but research has shown that when you go on an Atkins diet, heart disease gets worse, bottom line. I was on TV last week with someone from Atkins who said, 'Oh, we don't support eating bacon and meat.' Give me a break! Every time you see a picture of Atkins, he's in front of a smorgasbord of bacon and sausage and Brie!"

It's tempting to think that Perricone would agree with Ornish, because he says, "The problem with Atkins is, he doesn't distinguish between bad fats and good fats. And I don't think people should go into ketosis, because ketones are pro-inflammatory—they are toxic cells—so ketosis isn't the best state to be in. But Atkins is still far superior to the other idiots who are ruining the health of America."

Ornish, Perricone says, is just such an idiot. "Dean Ornish and the other misinformation professors said these no-fat, low-fat diets would decrease our obesity and our heart disease. Look where that got us! As far as I'm concerned, we can line up the Dean Ornishes and send them to another country!"

"I've never heard of Dr. Perricone," Atkins (himself!) says wearily. "As for Dean Ornish, I don't think he has ever read my book, or if he has, he probably decided he shouldn't talk about it. He still goes around telling people that my diet is all fried pork rinds. It's true that I *allow* them, but it's not like that's what I'm telling people to eat! I'm hoping that people would change the proportions and stop doing what they're doing, but the most important thing about a diet is that it be suitable for life. Therefore, the enjoyment factor is so essential. So far, no one's come up with a diet that people can stay on: *We* are trying to do that." Atkins sighs. "The whole principle, the reason we restrict carbs, is so that fat becomes your source of energy. What the critics are really saying is, burning your fat is dangerous. Well, saying that if a person is 80 pounds overweight it's dangerous for him to lose fat is just about as stupid as it sounds.

"I'm on my way to dinner, and Mario Batali and Daniel Boulud are cooking," says Drew Nieporent. "Do I eat Mario's ravioli or Daniel's squab? Which is the BIGGER SIN?"

"Dean Ornish is so determined to make me look bad," Atkins says finally. "He doesn't even know that fried pork rinds are actually very low in fat."

TEN DAYS INTO RESEARCHING THIS story, I am at my wit's end. How best to be virtuous, healthful, emaciated?

Restaurateur Drew Nieporent, who recently lost 100 pounds on a diet of his own invention, seems similarly confused. "I'm on my way to dinner, and Mario Batali and Daniel Boulud are cooking tonight," he says. "Now, my question is: Do I eat Mario's ravioli or Daniel's squab? The ravioli is starch, so I can't eat it without feeling guilty. But the squab is probably lacquered in honey and basted in butter. Which is the bigger sin? I'd love to believe in the Atkins regimen, but I'm like, *I don't think so.* What I always remember with Atkins is, don't put skim milk in your coffee; use heavy cream. What? The only thing that makes any sense is to drink green tea."

Faced with so much confusion, New Yorkers are making up their own weight-loss strategies. "I've lost 25 pounds in about four months on this made-up diet," says literary agent Esmond Harmsworth. "It's a combination of ideas from Canyon Ranch and my boyfriend's trainer. You have to start with a fairly big breakfast with some juice and complex carbohydrates. At lunch, I'd have mostly vegetables and fruits, grilled fish, no salad unless I had no dressing. And for dinner, no carbs at all under any circumstances, no fruit. The theory is, if you have carbs and fruit in the active part of the day you can burn them off, but they're absolutely not okay if you have them just before bed. The other point is, one day a week you can eat whatever you want."

AS I WRITE THIS, I AM EATING A raisin-nut roll. I don't feel logy or depressed or bloated or lethargic; I do not have cancer or diabetes or Alzheimer's; I am not fat. I do have a pimple, but that was true even before I bought this bread.

I call Walter Willett, chairman of the department of nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health, who is perhaps the most respected researcher of nutrition in this country and has spent more than $100 million testing the effects of fats and carbs on more than 300,000 subjects. "The evidence is getting stronger that going to a low-carbohydrate diet is a good way to control your weight," he says, "but eating large amounts of butter and steak is not healthy—that's where the *Times* coverage was inadequate." (Willet was a major source in the story.) "The main thing with Atkins is that it is very high in animal fats, and all else being equal, that will raise the risk of heart disease, colon cancer, and prostate cancer. But in terms of heart disease, weight loss is so beneficial that it does outweigh the adverse effects of eating animals. The thing is, there's a big window in between Atkins and the low-fat diet. It's not all or nothing."

This is starting to sound reasonable. "The fundamental problem with a low-fat diet for most people is that they can't stick to it," Willet continues. "For some people, if they're really active, a low-fat diet can work, but those people are rare, and even among them, many would have better blood biochemistry and still stay lean if they had more of the right fats, which is to say unsaturated, olive oil and so forth. You can envision the ideal, moderate diet if you just place yourself in Rome and walk down the piazza: You'll see dozens of different kinds of vegetables floating in olive oil, have a little fish, a glass of wine. And they usually give you just a *little* pasta. Most people will be better off—there are actual positive benefits—eating *some* grain products."

I finish my roll and smile. ■

cue

Thea

Edited by Ada Calhoun

Broadway

Previews and Openings

Dinner at Eight
High-society New Yorkers behave badly to highly comic effect in George S. Kaufman's and Edna Ferber's 1932 dinner-party play. $55–$70. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 12/19 opening. • Vivian Beaumont Theater, Lincoln Center (212-239-6200).

Imaginary Friends
Swoosie Kurtz and Cherry Jones star in Nora Ephron's play about the vicious rivalry between writers Lillian Hellman and Mary McCarthy. $55–$90. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. In previews for a 12/12 opening. (See box.) • Barrymore Theatre, 243 W. 47th St. (212-239-6200).

Tartuffe
Joe Dowling directs Molière's farce in a Roundabout Theatre Company production. $40–$65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2. In previews for a 1/9 opening. Through 2/16. • American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. (212-719-1300).

Now Playing

Aida
Disney's epic musical about the Nubian princess Aida (now played by Simone) and the Egyptian prince who captures her, with music by Elton John and lyrics by Tim Rice. Eye-popping sets and costumes by Bob Crowley. $25–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Palace Theatre, 1554 Broadway, at 47th St. (212-307-4747).

Beauty and the Beast
The family-friendly musical adaptation of Disney's film is no *Lion King*, but it's still entertaining kids by the busload. Jamie-Lynn Sigler of *The Sopranos* is Belle. $25–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. • Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, 205 W. 46th St. (212-307-4747).

★ Cabaret
Sam Mendes's 1998 Tony-winning adaptation of the musical based on Christopher Isherwood's *Berlin Stories* is dark in spirit and light on clothes. The decadent world of Weimar-era Berlin cabaret is re-created, appropriately enough, in what was once the notorious nightclub Studio 54. Raul Esparza and Molly Ringwald star. $45–$95. Mon., Tues., Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2. • Studio 54, 254 W. 54th St. (212-239-6200).

☆ Chicago
This lurid musical about the celebrity potential of female murderers won six Tonys in 1996. In this stylish production, choreographed by Ann Reinking (after Bob Fosse) and directed by Walter Bobbie, female inmates in a Jazz Age Chicago prison vie for the attention of a flashy lawyer (now Billy Zane of *Titanic*) and the tabloid press. $20–$90. Mon., Tues., Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2. • Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

Dance of the Vampires
Michael Crawford, the original Phantom of the Opera, stars as Count Von Krolock, a nineteenth-century vampire who tries to win the soul and body of a beautiful young woman. $25-$95. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. • Minskoff Theatre, 200 W. 45th St. (212-307-4100).

Flower Drum Song
Despite David Henry Hwang's p.c. new book, there are still plenty of clichés in this updated production of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical about a Chinese nightclub in San Francisco. But the razzmatazz remains, too, and most of the songs, even wrenched out of context, are not without charm. (Simon; 10/28/02) $65–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Virginia Theatre, 245 W. 52nd St. (212-239-6200).

★ 42nd Street
The hit 1933 movie about the chorus girl who becomes a star was made into a Broadway musical in 1980 and ran for eight years. The show is back, and it's an absolute knockout. *42nd Street* is on 42nd Street, God is in his Heaven, and all is right with the world. Now Kate Levering is back, too, as the lead. (Simon; 5/14/01) $25–$100. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. (212-307-4100).

★ Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune
Edie Falco (*The Sopranos*) and Stanley Tucci (*Road to Perdition*) headline this revival of Terrence McNally's tender play about a waitress and a short-order cook in New York who spend the night together. As directed by Joe Mantello, this slice of life sprinkled with all sorts of spicy toppings proves surprisingly nourishing. (Simon; 8/19/02) $35–$80. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Through 12/29. • Belasco Theatre, 111 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?
Final week! Sally Field and Bill Irwin star in Edward Albee's dense Tony-winning drama about a successful architect who, at the pinnacle of his career, must confess to his wife and son the awful secret of his affair with, yes, a goat. (Simon; 3/25/02) $25–$80. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Through 12/15. • John Golden Theatre, 252 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

The Graduate
Lorraine Bracco (*The Sopranos*) now stars as Mrs. Robinson in Terry Johnson's disastrous stage adaptation of the 1967 film. (Simon; 4/15/02) $21–$81. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Plymouth Theatre, 236 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

★ Hairspray
This exuberant musical based on John Waters's 1988 film follows the efforts of plump teen Tracy Turnblad (Marissa Jaret Winokur) to win over the hunk and the world as a dancer and integrationist on *The Corny Collins Show*. So many numbers bring down the house, it's a wonder the Neil Simon Theatre is still standing after the final curtain. (Gerard; 8/26/02) $65–$100. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Neil Simon Theatre, 250 W. 52nd St. (212-307-4100).

★ Hollywood Arms
Hal Prince directs this thoroughly endearing new play by Carrie Hamilton and Carol Burnett based on Burnett's memoir about growing up at the foot of the Hollywood Hills. (Simon; 11/11/02) $20–$80. Tues.–Sat at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Cort Theater, 138 W. 48th St. (212-239-6200).

Into the Woods
Vanessa Williams stars in Stephen Sondheim's mythic Tony winner, a journey through the fairy-tale forests of Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, and others. (Simon; 5/13/02) $40–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Broadhurst Theater, 235 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

La Bohème
Baz Luhrmann's much-anticipated production of Puccini's opera, with three principal casts performing in rotation. $20–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Broadway Theatre, 1681 Broadway, at 52nd St. (212-239-6200).

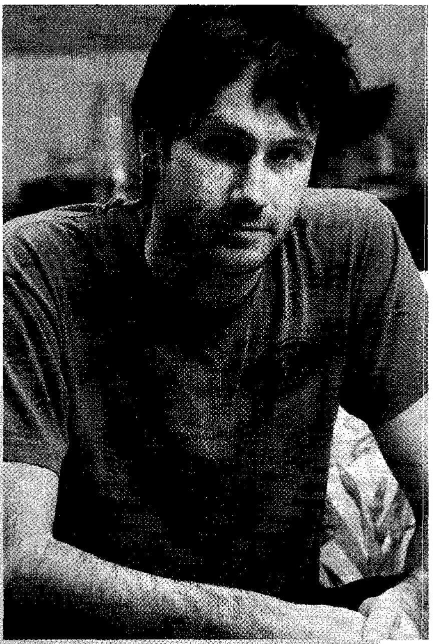
Les Misérables
An audacious button-pusher based on the Victor Hugo novel, with over-the-top songs like "Do You Hear the People Sing?" and "I Dreamed a Dream." The show, which is in its seventeenth year, is due to close in March. $20–$85. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. • Imperial Theater, 249 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

★ The Lion King
Based on the popular Disney movie, this inventive production, which won a slew of 1998 Tony awards, is wrought with joyful mastery by experimental director Julie Taymor. $25–$100. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. • New Amsterdam Theater, 214 W. 42nd St. (212-307-4747).

Mamma Mia!
Nostalgic for the disco era? This musical about a young bride-to-be and her single mother, scored by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus with 22 Abba tunes,

Talent

Family Man



HOME FRONT: Josh Hamilton, star of the Manhattan Theatre Club's *Gone Home*.

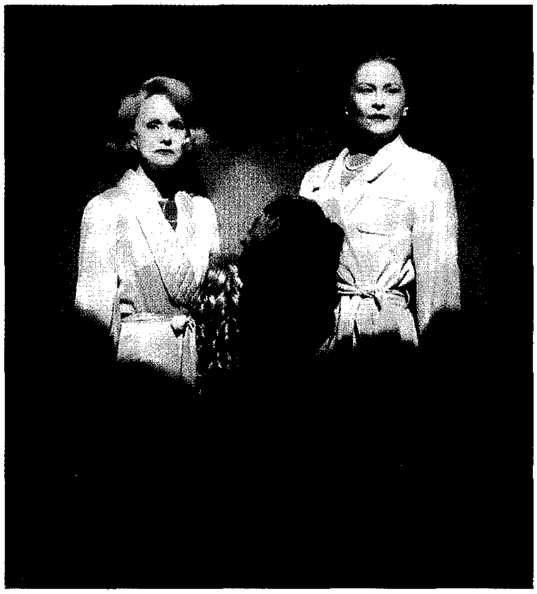
"That's so *Sam Shepard!*" Josh Hamilton exclaims during a conversation about gothic families. Only acting junkies use playwrights as adjectives, and, true to form, the 33-year-old West Village native is a workhorse. He currently stars in John Corwin's **Gone Home**, which opens at the Manhattan Theatre Club December 17, but he recently spent ten months on Broadway in *Proof* and, in his spare time, taped a spot on *Absolutely Fabulous* as Edina's long-lost son, Serge. In *Gone Home*, Hamilton plays a writer who returns to his family to find "a seemingly normal midwestern living room. To say much more would give it away. Part of the fun for the audience is figuring out what's really going on. But my character does worry a lot about the future, which is a stretch," he admits, with a smile, "because I have this amazing ability to not really think about the future at all." (See "Off Broadway: Previews and Openings.")

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOAN MARCUS.

Feud of the Gods

Gracious stars of the theater, Cherry Jones and Swoosie Kurtz are thrilled to be working together in Nora Ephron's new play, delighted to be . . . "We're not speaking," Kurtz corrects us, icily. Uh . . . the notorious rivalry between Lillian Hellman and Mary McCarthy is the subject of **Imaginary Friends**, which opens December 12, and . . . "I'm kidding!" Kurtz yells, laughing. "Cherry's a dream, onstage and off! I think Lillian and Mary could have been very good friends, too. They were both in a man's world, but boy, did they make themselves heard. They lived hard. They drank and smoked, and did these girls get around! Lillian was no beauty, but she was so sexually aggressive, I think men were shocked into going along with it. You know, part of why they went so far in their careers, aside from talent, was that they slept with a lot of important, powerful men. It's a valuable lesson for all of us." (See "Broadway: Previews and Openings.")

THE GROUP: Swoosie Kurtz and Cherry Jones reenact one of the great twentieth-century literary feuds.



will take you back. $55–$98.75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Winter Garden Theater, 1634 Broadway, at 50th St. (212-563-5544).

Man of La Mancha
Tony winner Brian Stokes Mitchell plays the windmill-chaser in this new production of the 1965 musical. See John Simon's review in this issue. $25–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Martin Beck Theatre, 302 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

Mandy Patinkin: Celebrating Sondheim
Another hundred people just got off of the train . . . to go see this concert of Sondheim's hits from *Sweeney Todd*, *Company*, *Into the Woods*, etc. $65. Schedule varies; call for details. Through 1/6. • Henry Miller Theatre, 124 W. 43rd St. (212-239-6200).

Medea
Fiona Shaw stars as the infanticidal Euripides heroine for a limited Broadway run. $60–$80. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2. Through 2/22. • Brooks Atkinson Theatre, 256 W. 47th St. (211-307-4100).

★ Metamorphoses
Writer-director Mary Zimmerman and her company use a 27-foot-long pool of water to tell Ovid's classic tales of Midas, Narcissus, and more. The myths have power despite some overly cute modern touches. (Simon; 10/29/01) $35–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Circle in the Square Theatre, 1633 Broadway, at 50th St. (212-239-6200).

Movin' Out
A new musical conceived, choreographed, and directed by Twyla Tharp and based on songs by Billy Joel. The dancers are on target and the second act is at moments quite good, but overall, the show fails to tell a story. (Simon; 10/28/02) $40–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Richard Rodgers Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. (212-307-4100).

★ Oklahoma!
Choreographer Susan Stroman (*The Producers*) and director Trevor Nunn (*Les Miz*) bring their acclaimed revival of the Rodgers and Hammerstein classic Stateside. Something seems to have been lost in transit, but the songs, sets, and choreography should be enough to make *Oklahoma!* okay with you. (Simon; 4/8/02) $20–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. (See box.) • Gershwin Theatre, 222 W. 51st St. (212-307-4100).

Our Town
Direct from the Westport Country Playhouse, Thornton Wilder's play about 1903 Grover's Corners, New Hampshire, arrives on Broadway, starring Paul Newman in his first stint there since 1964. See John Simon's review in this issue. $75. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Through 1/26. • Booth Theatre, 222 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

The Phantom of the Opera
Andrew Lloyd Webber's campy version of the macabre tale, given an opulent spin by director Hal Prince, is one of the longest-running shows in Broadway history. And that famous chandelier keeps on falling. $20–$90. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. • Majestic Theater, 247 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

★ The Producers
There's no ignoring the success of Mel Brooks's musical, directed and choreographed by Susan Stroman. Based on Brooks's Oscar-winning 1968 film about Broadway showmen who set out to produce the "surefire flop" *Springtime for Hitler*, the show set records at the 2001 Tony Awards. Roger Bart, who originated the role of Carmen Ghia, will return to assume the role of Leo Bloom starting 12/17. $30–$100. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • St. James Theatre, 246 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

★ Proof
Anne Heche dazzles as a young woman mourning the death of her mentally unstable mathematician father. Not making things any easier are her type-A sister, a nosy graduate student (Neil Patrick Harris), and a groundbreaking proof of uncertain provenance that appears in her late father's office. Rewarded with a Pulitzer and several Tonys. $20–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Through 1/5. • Walter Kerr Theatre, 219 W. 48th St. (212-239-6200).

★ Rent
This Pulitzer-winning musical about early nineties squatter culture has the best pop-music score Broadway has heard in 30 years. Jonathan Larson's songs, his heart, and his soul have lost none of their power in the six years this show has been on Broadway. 'N Sync's Joey Fatone now stars. (Gerard; 9/16/02) $35–$95. Mon., Tues., Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 7. • Nederlander Theater, 208 W. 41st St. (212-307-4100).

★ Russell Simmons' Def Poetry Jam on Broadway
In an act of faith in spoken word's appeal, Russell Simmons conceived this night of performance poetry, and it's paying off. A D.J. and nine vibrant young slam poets have brought political activism, hip-hop, and a whole new audience to Broadway. $25–$65. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 5 and 9, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Longacre Theatre, 220 W. 48th St. (212-239-6200).

Say Goodnight Gracie
Before he can join Gracie in the afterlife, George Burns (Frank Gorshin) must give one final performance. The show combines a nostalgic sashay down memory lane with a greatest-hits jokebook, but you'll be glad Burns finally passes the test and makes it to heaven. (Simon; 10/28/02) $60–$65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Helen Hayes Theatre, 240 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

★ Thoroughly Modern Millie
Sutton Foster turns gawkiness into something gazelle-like as Millie, a young woman who comes to New York to make her fortune. This winner of multiple Tonys is a mind-teasing and heart-tickling delight. (Simon; 4/29/02) $60–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Marquis Theatre, 1535 Broadway, at 45th St. (212-307-4100).

Urinetown
A water shortage forces city-dwellers to comply with a pay-per-pee system in this parody of, or perhaps ode to, the modern musical. *Urinetown* rose from the downtown Fringe Festival to become a Tony winner and Broadway smash, but it lacks internal logic. (Simon; 9/24/01) $35–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun at 3. • Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. (212-239-6200).

Off Broadway

Previews and Openings

Adult Entertainment
Danny Aiello and Jeannie Berlin star in this new Elaine May comedy about six members of the porn industry who decide to go freelance. $25–$65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 12/11 opening. • Variety Arts Theatre, 110 Third Ave. (212-239-6200).

Gone Home
This drama about a writer having problems with his family marks the New York debut of playwright John Corwin. $45. Tues.–Sun. at 7:30, Sat. and Sun. at 3. In previews for a 12/17 opening. Through 1/26. (See box.) • Manhattan Theatre Club, Stage II, 131 W. 55th St. (212-581-1212).

Hank Williams: Lost Highway
Randal Myler (*Love, Janis*) directs this new bio-musical of the country star (played by Jason Petty). It follows his career from Alabama honky-tonks to stardom to his death 50 years ago. $40–$45. Mon. and Tues. at 7, Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sun. at 7. In previews for a 12/19 opening. Through 1/19. • Manhattan Ensemble Theater, 55 Mercer St. (212-239-6200).

Joe and Betty
Set in the Catskills of the fifties, Murray Mednick's play

Ground Rules Except where noted, Broadway shows begin at 8 and are dark Monday. Capsule reviews are drawn from columns by John Simon and Jeremy Gerard, where noted; others are by Ada Calhoun. Stars (★) indicate our editors' and critics' recommendations. Wallet-watchers should keep in mind the TKTS booths, where discount tickets are available (for that day's performance only) to many Broadway and Off Broadway shows. TKTS booths are at Broadway and 47th Street and in South Street Seaport at the corner of Front and John Streets; call 212-768-1818 for more info. Involved in a production and want to submit details for a possible listing? Call 212-508-0740.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG SCHWARTZ.

about the madness-inducing breakup of a marriage is being moved up from Off-Off Broadway to Theatre Row. $45. Mon., Tues., Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. In previews for a 12/15 opening. Through 1/12. • Kirk Theatre, 410 W. 42nd St. (212-279-4200).

The Mercy Seat
Neil LaBute's new two-person drama, set on September 12, 2001, stars Sigourney Weaver and Liev Schreiber as an older woman–younger man couple at a crossroads in their relationship. $50. Schedule varies; call for details. In previews for a 12/18 opening. Through 1/12. • Acorn Theatre, 410 W. 42nd St. (212-279-4200).

Porterphiles
The York Theatre Company presents this new musical revue of more than 30 unpublished Cole Porter songs. $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2:30. In previews for a 12/17 opening. Through 1/12. • St. Peter's Theatre, 619 Lexington Ave., at 54th St. (212-239-6200).

A Pure Gospel Christmas
Producer Eric Krebs (*Little Ham*) stages this festive holiday show, which features a five-piece band and some of New York's best gospel singers. $20–$40. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews starting 12/12 for a 12/17 opening. Through 12/29. • John Houseman Theater, 450 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

Seven in One Blow, or the Brave Little Kid
Axis Company is off Shakespeare and into the brothers Grimm. This interactive play with music opens to both kids and adults on 12/13. $10. Fri. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2 and 4. Through 12/22. • Axis Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. (212-807-9300).

Tommy Tune: White Tie and Tails
Beloved nine-time Tony winner Tommy Tune, backed up by the Manhattan Rhythm Kings and a sixteen-member band, performs a program of song-and-dance numbers set to the music of, among others, Cole Porter, and the Beatles. $75. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3 and 7. In previews for a 12/18 opening. • Little Shubert Theatre, 422 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

Now Playing

Almost Live From the Betty Ford Clinic
Celebrity addictions are shamelessly ridiculed by Michael West (*Forbidden Broadway*). $20. Thursdays at 8. Through 1/30. • Douglas Fairbanks Theatre, 432 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

Antigone
Mac Wellman's episodic, linguistically complex adaptation of the Greek tragedy, staged by Big Dance Theater. $32. Thurs.–Sat. at 7, Sun. at 2. Through 12/22. • Dance Theater Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. (212-924-0077).

Art of the Tale
Popular storyteller Odds Bodkin presents *The Winter Cherries: Tales for Christmas and Chanukah*. $45. Schedule varies; call for details. Through 12/15. • Clark Studio Theater, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St. (800-554-1333).

Bartenders
Another round for Louis Mustillo! His one-man play about six men who serve drinks for a living is on its second theater, following a successful run earlier this fall. $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 5, Sun. at 3. • John Houseman Theater, Studio II, 450 W. 42nd St. (212-206-1515).

Betty Rules
The girls of Betty, a politically active band that's been around since the eighties, star as themselves in this self-congratulatory stroll down memory lane. Directed by Michael Greif (*Rent*). $29.90–$44.90. Tues–Thurs. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 5. • Zipper Theatre, 336 W. 37th St. (212-239-6200).

Birdy's Bachelorette Party
Celebrate the upcoming wedding of a sweet legal secretary to her construction-worker boyfriend with wacky antics including a lingerie show, karaoke, and a sex-toy demonstration. $60 includes postshow admission to the club and party favors. Fri. at 9, Sat. at 8. • Culture Club, 179 Varick St. (212-352-3101).

Blessing in Disguise
Seven magnificent men fight for the right to perform. $55. Mon.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 5 and 8. • Times Square Theatre, 675 Eighth Ave., at 43rd St. (212-206-1515).

Bliss
Rattlestick Productions continues its eighth season with Ben Bettenbender's play about murder and misunderstanding. $37.50. Wed.–Mon. at 8. Through 12/22. • Rattlestick Theatre, 224 Waverly Pl. (212-206-1515).

Blue Man Group: Tubes
You've seen the Intel commercials; now see the popular painted men in real life. Props include toilet paper and cereal. $55–$65. Tues.–Thurs. at 8; Fri. at 7 and 10; Sat. at 4, 7, and 10; Sun. at 2, 5, and 8. • Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. (212-254-4370).

Blue/Orange
Great acting can't save Joe Penhall's metaphor-rich drama about mental illness and racism, a feat of galloping authorial pretension. (Simon; 12/9/02) $45. Tues.–Sun. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Atlantic Theater Company, 336 W. 20th St. (212-239-6200).

Boston Marriage
This new drawing-room comedy from David Mamet, starring Martha Plimpton and Kate Burton, is preposterous, arrogant, crude, pointless, and numbingly dull. (Simon; 12/2/02) $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 2, Sun. at 7. Extended through 12/22. • Public Theater, 425 Lafayette St. (212-239-6200).

Burn This
Elisabeth Shue and Peter Sarsgaard now star in this flaccid, dated Signature Theatre Company production of Lanford Wilson's 1987 play about four New Yorkers grieving for a dead dancer. (Gerard; 9/30/02) $65. Tues.–Sat. at 8. Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Union Square Theater, 100 E. 17th St. (212-307-4100).

A Celtic Christmas
Traditional holiday music, an adaptation of Dylan Thomas's *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, and short stories by Frank McCourt, George Bernard Shaw, and others. $35–$40. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. Through 12/29. • Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. (212-727-2737).

A Christmas Carol
F. Murray Abraham is Scrooge in Radio City Entertainment's high-powered 90-minute musical production of the Dickens classic. $29–$79. Schedule varies; call for details. Through 12/29. • Theater at Madison Square Garden, 4 Penn Plaza (212-307-4111).

★ Christmas With the Crawfords
Former Factory denizen Joey Arias plays Joan in this high-glitz musical centered around the Christmas Eve radio broadcast of *Mommie Dearest* fame. $40. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 5, Sun. at 7. Through 12/28. • Producers Club Theatre II, 358 W. 44th St. (212-206-1515).

Class Mothers '68
Tony winner Priscilla Lopez (*A Chorus Line*) stars in Eric H. Weinberger's new comedy as six different mothers who arrange a musical tribute to their teenage children. $45. Schedule varies; call for details. Through 2/9. • Clurman Theatre at Theatre Row, 410 W. 42nd St. (212-279-4200).

Crowns
A new play with gospel music based on Michael Cunningham and Craig Marberry's collection of oral histories and photographs of black women in their church hats. See John Simon's review in this issue. $55. Tues., Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Wed. at 7, Sun. at 3. Through 1/5. • Second Stage Theatre, 307 W. 43rd. St. (212-246-4422).

★ De La Guarda
A raucous show that's part carnival, part rock concert, and almost entirely airborne. Expect audience participation and mist. $20–$50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Fri. at 10:30, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 7. • Daryl Roth Theatre, 20 Union Square East, at 15th St. (212-239-6200).

Debbie Does Dallas
What's more contemptible than a clean dirty joke, especially when inflated into a full-length musical? Sherie Rene Scott stars in this jejune, witless travesty of the well-known porn movie. (Simon; 11/18/02) $30–$35. Mon.–Fri. at 8, Fri. at 10:30, Sat. at 7 and 10. • Jane Street Theatre, 113 Jane St. (212-239-6200).

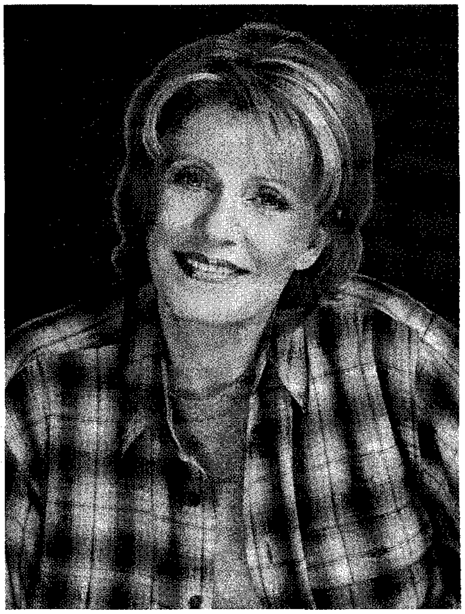
★ The Exonerated
Whatever you may think of the death penalty, this play, based on interviews with innocent men and women freed from death row, should make you think—and feel—some more. Under Bob Balaban's direction, the ten actors (now including Bebe Neuwirth and Chad Lowe) are unerring. (Simon; 10/28/02) $55. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 5 and 9, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Bleecker Street Theatre, 45 Bleecker St. (212-307-4100).

Far Away
The U.S. premiere of British playwright Caryl Churchill's cockamamie play is full of discourse about a world in which nations, animals, plants, and objects

Cast Change

An OK Role

Oh, what a beautiful day December 14 will be for Patty Duke: It's her birthday, and it's when she replaces Andrea Martin as Aunt Eller in **Oklahoma!** It's been a long time away for Duke, whose last real turn on Broadway was in 1959, at the age of 12, in *The Miracle Worker* (after which she won an Academy Award for the film). "And 40 years ago, I was in something called *The Isle of Children*, which didn't last eight performances," she notes. So what brings her back now? "*Oklahoma!* has a real weight this time out—this is my old-lady philosophy—because of the turmoil going on in our country right now. You're a farmer, you're a cowboy, but you better stick together." The show's peacemaker, of course, is Eller, a character for whom Duke has an understandable affection: "I see her as a woman who cares deeply about other people, who's devoted to fair play, and who's been through a whole lot." (See "Broadway: Now Playing.")



WESTERN SWING: Patty Duke steps into *Oklahoma!*

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PHOTOGRAPH BY JOAN MARCUS.

wage fathomless war in absurd alliances and incomprehensible enmity. (Simon; 11/25/02) $55. Tues.–Thurs. and Sat. at 8, Fri. at 7 and 9, Sat. and Sun. at 3. Extended through 1/18. Frances McDormand stars through 12/22. • New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. (212-239-6200).

★ Forbidden Broadway 20th Anniversary Celebration

Current targets of this long-running spoof of musicals past and present include: "saucy Fosse" choreography, the "tongue-spraining" lyrical stylings of Steven Sondheim, and "all the Nazi musicals" (*Cabaret*, *The Producers*, and *The Sound of Music*). $49.50–$57. Mon., Tues., Fri., and Sat. at 8:15, Sun. at 3:30 and 7:30, Wed. and Sat. at 2:30. • Douglas Fairbanks Theatre, 432 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

The Fourth Wall

Not ready for prime time: Sandy Duncan and Charles Kimbrough star in A. R. Gurney's fatuous and smug play about George W. and suburbia. (Simon; 11/25/02) $48. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2:30, Sun. at 3. Extended through 12/22. • Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. (212-333-4052).

The General From America

Corin Redgrave stars as Benedict Arnold in Richard Nelson's 1996 play about treason, a miscast, disorienting co-production by Theatre for a New Audience and Houston's Alley Theatre. (Simon; 12/9/02) $55. Tues.–Sat. at 7:30, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Lucille Lortel Theatre, 121 Christopher St. (212-239-6200).

The Guys

Anne Nelson's play about a fire captain who lost many of his men and an editor who helps him write the eulogies. $55. Tues.–Fri. at 7. Through 12/20. • Flea Theater, 41 White St. (212-206-1515).

Harlem Song

George C. Wolfe's new musical traces the music and culture of Harlem from the twenties to the present, and despite re-creating moments like Ella Fitzgerald's winning performance at Amateur Night at the Apollo, there is no real passion behind this production. (Simon; 9/19/02) $20–$55. Sat. at 8, Sun. and Mon. at 7, Sat. at 2 and 5, Sun. at 3. Through 12/31. • Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. (212-307-7171).

Henry V

Saint Crispin's Day comes early this year with a Jean Cocteau Repertory production of the Shakespeare drama. Schedule varies; call for details. Through 1/5. • Jean Cocteau Repertory, 330 Bowery (212-677-0060).

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change

They're here. They're straight. Get used to it. A musical revue about heterosexual love. $49.50–$60. Mon., Tues., Fri., and Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2:30, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. • Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (212-239-6200).

The Importance of Being Earnest

Learn from Wilde's masterpiece why being earnest is usually a terrible idea. $40. Schedule varies; call for details. Through 1/2. • Jean Cocteau Repertory, 330 Bowery (212-677-0060).

It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Murder!

The lighting director is the real star of this murder-mystery comedy, which Texan company Pegasus will stage *in living black and white*. $45. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • DR2, 103 E. 15th St. (212-239-6200).

Jolson & Company

This new musical about Al Jolson, the legendary "Jazz Singer," follows his epic career (1915–1950) through vaudeville, Broadway, radio, and talkies. $65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2:30, Sun. at 3. • Century Center for the Performing Arts, 111 E. 15th St. (212-239-6200).

A Last Dance for Sybil

Obie and Emmy winner Ruby Dee (*Checkmates*, *The Glass Menagerie*) stars in this new play from Ossie Davis (*Purlie Victorious*), a drama about power and economic freedom. $20–$40. Wed.–Fri. at 7:30, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3. Through 12/15. • St. Clement's Theatre, 423 W. 46th St. (212-279-4200).

Late Night Catechism

Another interactive comedy (this one set in Catholic school) from the producers of *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding*. $40. Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. • St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. (212-239-6200).

Love, Janis

A bio-musical based on the book *Love, Janis* by Joplin's sister Laura and performed by a trio of actresses. $45–$100. Mon, Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10:30, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Through 1/5. • Village Theater, 158 Bleecker St. (212-307-4100).

A Man of No Importance

Mediocre musical based on the mediocre 1994 film about a repressed Dublin bus driver who moonlights with an amateur theater company. The story abounds in bittersweet wistfulness while also trying to be a lusty comedy. (Simon; 7/21/02) $65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Through 12/29. • Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater, 150 W. 65th St. (212-239-6200).

Menopause the Musical

A parody about "the change," set in Bloomingdale's. $49.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Wed., Thurs., Sat., and Sun. at 3. • Playhouse 91, 316 E. 91st St. (212-307-4100).

Naked Boys Singing

Just like a regular musical revue, but without pants. $35–$65. Mon., Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Actor's Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. So. (212-239-6200).

Perfect Crime

Warren Manzi's long-running thriller about a psychiatrist accused of killing her rich husband, and the police detective who fell for her. $40. Mon.–Thurs. at 8, Wed.–Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3 and 7 • Duffy Theater, Broadway at 46th St. (212-695-3401).

The Prince and the Pauper

A new musical based on the Twain novel, with music and lyrics by Neil Berg, additional lyrics by Bernie Garzia, and book by Garzia and Ray Roderick. $40–$65. Wed. and Thurs. at 2 and 7:30, Fri. and Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

Puppetry of the Penis

An oddly innocent lesson in "the ancient Australian art of genital origami." $29.90–$39.90. Tues.–Thurs. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 7 and 9:30, Sun. at 7. • John Houseman Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

★ The Radio City Christmas Spectacular

Santa, the Rockettes, the Wooden Soldiers, and the Living Nativity have been whipping audiences into a Christmas frenzy since 1933. Now with an amazing 3-D opener. $36–$90. Schedule varies; call for details. Through 1/5. • Radio City Music Hall, 1260 Sixth Ave., at 50th St. (212-307-1000).

Rapt

World premiere of Roland Tec's new play about a highly motivated global-communications human-resources administrator. $15. Thurs.–Mon. at 8. Through 12/21. • Culture Project at 45 Bleecker, 45 Bleecker St. (212-352-3101).

Salome: The Reading

Lust, revenge, the Bible, and star power. Al Pacino, Marisa Tomei, and Dianne Wiest participate in this dramatic reading of Oscar Wilde's once-banned drama, with original musical accompaniment. $50. Schedule varies; call for details. Through 12/22. • St. Ann's Warehouse, 38 Water St., Dumbo, Brooklyn (866-468-7619).

Stomp

This boisterous riot of found-object percussion has been a-clang since 1994. $35–$60. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10:30, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Orpheum, 126 Second Ave. (212-477-2477).

The Tempest

The Pearl stages Shakespeare's magical shipwreck-comedy. $30–$40. Tues. at 7, Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2. Through 1/26. • Pearl Theatre Company, 80 St. Mark's Pl. (212-598-9802).

★ Temporary Help

The brand-new Revelation Theater stages David Wiltse's psychosexual thriller of the backwoods-naturalistic school. The production values are just adequate, but the actors, including the sexy Margaret Colin, are a joy to watch. (Simon; 12/9/02) $37.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Through 1/12. • Women's Project Theatre, 424 W. 55th St. (212-239-6200).

Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding

A wedding and reception, with Italian buffet, champagne, and wedding cake. Wonderfully tacky—and, with more than 4,000 performances, it's lasted longer than a lot of real marriages. $75–$80. Thurs.–Sun. at 7, Sun. at 2. • St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St., and Vinnie Black's Coliseum, Hotel Edison, 221 W. 46th St. (212-239-6200).

☆ Tuesdays With Morrie

This rare play might change your life. Jeffrey Hatcher and Mitch Albom's 90-minute intermissionless stage adaptation of Albom's deeply moving story is indelible, unforgettable—a true memento mori for all of us. (Simon; 12/2/02) $45–$65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 3. • Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Ln. (212-307-4100).

Underneath the Lintel

In Glen Berger's well-paced drama, a librarian begins a peculiar investigation after discovering a returned book that is 123 years overdue. $40. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. • SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. (212-239-6200).

★ The Vagina Monologues

Eve Ensler's oral history of a body part stitches together testimony from women from all over the world, from those who have experienced terrible abuse to those who have invented cute nicknames for what lies "down there." Performed by a rotating cast of three actresses. $55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 5, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. • Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (212-239-6200).

The Water Coolers

A new musical revue about corporate America from Thomas Michael Allen (creator of *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding*). $50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Dillons, 245 W. 54th St. (212-239-6200).

What Didn't Happen

Playwrights Horizons presents the world premiere of a play by Christopher Shinn about a writer in turmoil. Starring Chris Noth ("Mr. Big" from *Sex and the City*) and Suzanne Cryer (the "yadda yadda yadda" girl from *Seinfeld*). $50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3, Sun. at 7:30. Through 12/22. • Duke on 42nd Street, 229 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

★ A Year With Frog and Toad

Arnold Lobel's award-winning *Frog and Toad* books are the inspiration for this new children's musical about the friends' journey through the seasons. $10–$30. Fri. and Sat. at 7, Sat. at 2, Sun. schedule varies; call for details. • New Victory Theater, 209 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

Yellowman

This finalist for the 2002 Pulitzer Prize, a meditation on race relations in South Carolina, is an antitheatrical piece of bludgeoning repetition. (Simon; 11/18/02) $60. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 2:30, Sun. at 7. Through 12/15. • Manhattan Theatre Club Stage I, 131 W. 55th St. (212-581-1212).

★ Yentl

The treasured Folksbiene, America's only (and best) professional Yiddish theater, charmingly presents the Yiddish world premiere of Isaac Bashevis Singer's racy tale about the divine androgyny of the soul. Simultaneous English translation will be provided via headsets. $45. Tues.–Thurs. at 7, Sat. at 8, Sun. at 5:30, Wed. and Sun. at 2. Through 12/29. • PCMH Theatre, 344 W. 36th St. (212-307-4100).

Off-Off Broadway

★ Deep Dish Cabaret

This monthly performance salon and drinks party, hosted by *Ghent* magazine, usually pulls in some terrific, original acts. $10. Sat. 12/14 at 10:30. Doors open at 9. • DDC, 675 Hudson St., Buzzer 3N (212-247-1451).

A Murray Little Christmas

King of kings and of Kings county, Murray Hill rings in the new year with holiday songs, a snowball fight, and several vixen-visitors, including the Wau-Wau Sisters. $12. Sat. 12/14 at 9, Fri. 12/20 at 10, Sat. 12/21 at 10. • The Cutting Room, 19 W. 24th St. (212-539-3197).

One Day on Wall Street

Naked Angels' latest addition to the workshop series *Angels in Progress* is this financial-district fable by Julia Dahl. $15. Through 12/21. • Greenwich Street Theatre, 547 Greenwich St. (212-206-1515).

Uncle Jimmy's Dirty Basement

Eclectic band Coocoohandler's wildly popular collaboration with warped puppet collective the Elementals has been extended for a fourth month. $15. Fri. and Sat. at 8. Through 12/22. • Bowery Poetry Club, 308 Bowery (212-330-8193).

cue

Art

Edited by Edith Newhall

Galleries

Solos

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

★ András Böröcz
A new series of carved-pencil figures set within carved-pencil boxes featuring pencil-related tableaux; through 1/25/03. • Baumgold, 74 E. 79th St. (212-861-7338).

★ James Castle
Constructions and starkly rendered drawings, in soot on found paper, of the houses, barns, and landscapes surrounding the artist's home in Idaho; through 1/18/02. • Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (212-794-0550).

★ Joseph Cornell
Rarely exhibited collages, box constructions, objects, and toys; through 1/18/03. • Stone, 113 E. 90th St. (212-987-4997).

★ Peter Doig
Works on paper based on the artist's personal snapshots, popular films, art history, and advertising; through 1/19/03. • Werner, 4 E. 77th St. (212-988-1623).

★ Paul Thek and Edwin Klein
Document, a collaborative three-dimensional "album" of photographs, drawings, cards, and objects created in 1969 by the former, an American artist (1933–1988), and the latter, a Dutch designer and photographer, for installations at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, and the Moderna Museet, Stockholm; through 12/31. • Gat, 1100 Madison Ave. (212-327-0441).

57th Street Area

★ Jennifer Bartlett
New paintings; through 12/28. • Artemis • Greenberg Van Doren, 730 Fifth Ave. (212-445-0444).

Jim Dine
New horizontal paintings on wood panel and canvas that depict hand tools; through 1/11/03. • PaceWildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. (212-421-3292)

Al Held and George Sugarman
Works from the sixties by both artists, including boldly colored abstract paintings by the former and painted wood sculptures by the latter. Through 1/25/03. • Washburn, 20 W. 57th St. (212-397-6780)

★ David Kapp
Recent paintings of New York City street scenes; through 1/4/03. • De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave. (212-262-5050).

★ William Kentridge
Zeno Writing, a new film by the South African artist based on Italo Svevo's 1923 novel, *Confessions of Zeno*, and a series of related drawings; through 1/4/03. • Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (212-977-7160).

Käthe Kollwitz
Etchings, lithographs, and woodcuts; through 1/4/03. • St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (212-245-6734).

Tom Otterness
See No Evil, a new monumental three-figure sculpture; through 12/31. • Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (212-541-4900).

Daniel Scheimberg
Paintings that depict blurred military iconography, technological artifacts, and landscape; through 1/10/03. • Barquet, 41 E. 57th St. (212-644-9090).

Louis Stone
Abstract paintings dating from 1938 to 1942 that reflect the American artist's studies with Hans Hoffman in Germany and Andre L'hote in France, and his interest in jazz; through 1/11/03. • Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. (212-247-0082).

Soho and Tribeca

Carolyn Brady/Remy Hysbergue
Watercolor still lifes of flower bouquets/Abstract paintings on white Komacel PVC panels. Through 1/11/03. • Hoffman, 429 W. Broadway (212-966-6676).

David Hammons
An installation titled *Concerto in Black and Blue*; through 2/1/03. • Ace, 275 Hudson Ave. (212-255-5599).

★ Jutta Koether and Steven Parrino
A collaborative Dada-influenced environment of "failed paintings" in which a series of noise performances will take place (12/12 at 8, 12/17 at 8, and 1/4 at 8); through 1/4/03. • Swiss Institute, 495 Broadway (212-925-2035).

Claudia and Julia Müller
The first solo New York show by identical twins who are showing appropriated European restaurant menus, figurative drawings, and a video projection; through 12/30. • Maccarone, 45 Canal St. (212-431-4977), Wed.–Sun. noon–6.

Lisa Ruyter
Paintings of party scenes based on photographs taken by the artist at night in bars and restaurants; through 1/4/03. • Koenig, 249 Centre St. (212-334-9255).

★ Rosie Lee Tompkins
Brilliantly colored, geometrically patterned quilts by a Northern Californian African-American quiltmaker; through 12/28. • Blum, 99 Wooster St. (212-343-0441).

Cecelia Vicuña and César Paternosta
Photographs documenting street installations by the former, and abstract paintings by the latter; through 1/19/03. • Latincollector, 153 Hudson St. (212-334-7813).

Chelsea

★ Siah Armajani
Recent architectural sculptures; through 1/11/03. • Senior & Shopmaker, 21 E. 26th St. (212-213-6767).

★ Michael Ashkin
Photographic grids of marginalized landscapes and related written pieces from his "Notes Toward Desolation"; through 1/18/03. • Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. (212-627-6000).

Kutlug Ataman
Two new video installations; through 1/11/03. • Lehmann Maupin, 540 W. 26th St. (212-255-2923).

★ Chuck Close
New paintings of the artist and his family members, and of the artists Cecily Brown, Lisa Yuskavage, Paul Cadmus, James Siena, and Robert Rauschenberg, plus a companion exhibit of daguerreotype portraits of art-world notables; through 1/11/03. • PaceWildenstein and Pace/MacGill, 534 W. 25th St. (212-421-3292).

Edwin Dickinson/Sidney Goodman
A selection of paintings dating from 1912 to 1945 by this American artist (1891–1978) whose work is the subject of a traveling retrospective arriving at the National Academy of Design on January 31/Recent figurative works on paper that express the angst of the human condition. Through 1/4/03. • ACA, 529 W. 20th St. (212-206-8080).

★ Mark Dion
An installation of a large decomposing tree set inside a glass greenhouse that is intended to emphasize the inherent contradictions between the nature of an artifact and the context in which it is displayed for popular consumption; through 1/4/03. • Bonakdar, 521 W. 21st St. (212-414-4144).

★ Laurie Fendrich
Geometric abstract paintings whose compositions recall Russian constructivism and works by such American modernists as George L.K. Morris and Stuart Davis; through 1/25/03. (See box.) • Snyder, 601 W. 29th St. (212-871-1077).

Christian Garnett
Op-inspired paintings that depict grids of circles over luminous color fields; through 1/4/03. • Dee, 545 W. 20th St. (212-924-7545).

★ José Antonio Hernández-Diez
A video sculpture in which cardboard boxes and televisions are arranged to form the body of a giant worm; through 1/4/03. • Gering, 534 W. 22nd St. (646-336-7183).

★ Yayoi Kusama
Five recent installations that reflect the artist's interest in new technology while retaining her longstanding preoccupation with ideas of repetition and infinity; through 1/18/03. • Miller, 524 W. 26th St. (212-366-4774).

★ Wolfgang Laib
Drawings and photographs taken during the artist's travels; through 1/11/03. • Tonkonow, 535 W. 22nd St. (212-255-8450).

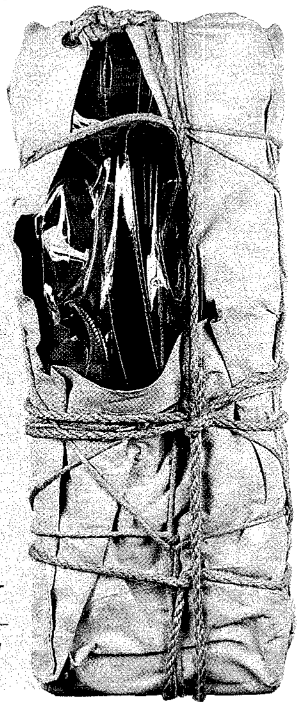
Xavier Mascaró
Forged-iron sculptures that incorporate rock, crystal, and lead, as well as video and sound; through 12/26. • Marlborough, 211 W. 19th St. (212-463-8634).

John Newsom
Paintings of insects and birds against pat-

Retrospective

Group Show

The notion of a multiple-edition original artwork seems so thoroughly sixties that it's hard to believe it was actually conceived 30 years earlier, by Marcel Duchamp. Still, we associate the multiple with Joseph Beuys and the Pop and Fluxus artists—Christo, Claes Oldenburg, Andy Warhol, Dieter Rot, George Brecht, and others—for whom the idea of producing several versions (or an unlimited number) of the same work was the ultimate Pop gesture, involving repetition, industrial or found materials, and humor. And like most good ideas, it's prospered: **Multiples: An Incomplete Survey**, at Brent Sikkema, includes works by the above artists (including Duchamp) and by such contemporary egalitarians as Robert Gober, Kara Walker, and Allan McCollum. (Through December 22; see "Galleries: Group Shows.")



FIT TO BE TIED: Christo's *Wrapped Payphone*, a 1988 edition of 30.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF BRENT SIKKEMA, NYC.

terned backgrounds; through 1/4/03. • Stux, 529 W. 20th St. (212-352-1600).

Alessandro Pessoli
A DVD animation and related drawings; through 1/16/03. • Kern, 532 W. 20th St. (212-367-9663).

★ Monique Prieto/Saint Clair Cemin
Recent abstract paintings/A new marble sculpture. Through 1/4/03. • Cheim & Read, 547 W. 25th St. (212-242-7727).

Harriet Shorr
Paintings that depict elements of landscapes and still life; through 1/4/03. • Pelavin, 13 Jay St. (212-925-9424).

★ Andy Warhol
Drawings dating from 1954 to 1985, depicting paintbrushes, paint cans, flowers, fruit, cigarettes, and other subjects; through 1/11/03. • Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave. (212-563-4474).

Group Shows

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

★ Roth Horowitz
"The Complete Run: Highlights From the Chaplick Collection," artist's books, multiples, and ephemera from the seventies, by Andre, Boetti, Broodthaers, On Kawara, Ruscha, Warhol, others; through 12/24. • 160a E. 70th St. (212-717-9067).

Salander-O'Reilly
"Italian Sculpture: From the Gothic to the Baroque," sculptures by Bernini, di Camaino, Pisano, della Robbia, Rossellino, others; through 2/1/03. • 20 E. 79th St. (212-879-6606).

57th Street Area

★ Adams
"Get in Line," works by Bedia, Dill, Kuitca, Shozawa, Sollins, others; through 12/28. • 41 W. 57th St. (212-644-5665).

Soho and Tribeca

Cavin-Morris
"Frida's World," photographs of Frida Kahlo by Lola Alvarez Bravo, Imogen Cunningham, Fritz Henle, Leo Matiz, and others, displayed alongside period Mexican jewelry, Tepehuana costumes, and ex-votos and retablos; through 1/4/03 • 560 Broadway (212-226-3768).

Suite 106
"My Father Told Me," works by Alaeff, Cantrell, Feyer, Mulder, others; through 1/11/03. • 112 Mercer St. (212-274-9166).

Chelsea

★ Alexander and Bonin
Sculpture by Bolande, Cole, Hatoum, McBride, Salcedo; through 1/18/03. • 132 Tenth Ave. (212-367-7474).

Cooper
Paintings from the early sixties by Baer, Judd, Kusama, Warhol, Ryman, others; through 1/11/03. • 534 W. 21st St. (212-255-1105).

Helman
"Overt Operation," works by Amrhein, Bing, Lombardi, Navarro, Opdyke, Schild; through 1/18/03. • 601 W. 26th St. (212-929-1545).

Meltzer
Photographs by Steinfeld; collages and assemblages by Cressman, a video by Plumb; through 1/11/03. • 516 W. 20th St. (212-727-9330).

Scott
Works on paper by Goldberg, Leñero, Matino, Salter, Vartanian; through 1/4/03. • 529 W. 20th St. (646-486-7004).

★ Sikkema
"Multiples: An Incomplete Survey," works dating from the sixties to the present by Artschwager, Beuys, Duchamp, Gober, Katz, McCollum, Trockel, Roth, others; through 12/22. (See box.) • 530 W. 22nd St. (212-929-2262).

White Columns
"Cheap," works made with inexpensive materials by Browder, Brown, Caccioppoli, Creech, Simerly, others; "White Rooms," photographs by Rettig and Cooley; through 1/26/03. • 320 W. 13th St. (212-924-4212).

Photography

★ Boesky
Portraits by Fuchs, Prinz, Ruff, Sander; through 12/20. • 535 W. 22nd St. (212-680-9889).

Dan Estabrook
Recent salt prints and calotypes that suggest mysterious events from the past; through 1/11/03. • Morthland, 511 W. 25th St. (212-242-7767).

Yuichi Hibi
*Film-noir*ish black-and-white photographs shot at night using only natural light; through 12/31. • Marvelli, 526 W. 26th St. (212-627-3363).

★ International Center of Photography
"Weegee's Trick Photography." Distortions of known artworks and caricatures of famous people made from the late forties until the late sixties; 12/13–2/16/03. • "Time of Change: Bruce Davidson, Civil Rights Photographs, 1961–65." Photographs from Davidson's four-year documentation of the movement; 12/13–2/16/03. • "First Photographs: William Henry Fox Talbot and the Birth of Photography." The first major American exhibition to explore the innovations of the British pioneer of photography (1800–1877), including many of the first images to use a negative-to-positive process; 12/13–2/16/03. (See box.) • 1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (212-857-0000), Tues.-Thurs. 10-5, Fri. 10-8 (5-8 p.m. voluntary contribution), Sat. and Sun. 10-6; $9, $6 students and seniors.

★ Kent
"Photography (as commentary)," works by B. N. Adams, D. Adams, Bayer, Burden, Erlich, Haacke, Hamilton, Kennard, Muntadas, Werthein; through 1/25/03. • 67 Prince St. (212-966-4500).

★ Gabriel Orozco
Photographs taken on a trip last July to Mali that concentrate on objects, phenomena, erosion, materiality, and the organic; through 1/4/03. • Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (212-977-7160).

The Proposition
"Depthography," works that use lenticular imaging techniques by Cook, Jones, Munn; through 1/1/03. • 559 W. 22nd St. (212-242-0035).

★ Throckmorton
Photographs of Peru by Chambi, Algaze, Meinel; through 2/4/03. • 145 E. 57th St. (212-223-1059).

Alexander Tsiaras
Large-format images from the photographer's book, *From Conception to Birth: A Life Unfolds* (Doubleday, 2000), that illustrate human development from single cell to newborn; through 1/4/03. • Ricco Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. (212-627-4819).

Ellen von Unwerth
Black-and-white photographs that tell a sadomasochistic story involving three young women, a baroness, a chauffeur, and a stablehand; through 1/11/03. • Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (212-966-6223).

Ryan Weideman
Self-portraits and portraits of passengers that the photographer, who is also a cab driver, took in his car over the past two decades; through 1/5/03. • Silverstein, 504 W. 22nd St. (212-627-3930).

★ Neil Winokur
Deadpan photographs of objects set against monochromatic backdrops of the same color; through 12/31. • Borden, 560 Broadway (212-431-0166).

Museums

American Folk Art Museum
★ "American Anthem: Masterworks From the American Folk Art Museum." More than 250 objects from the museum's permanent collection, including paint-

Three Not of a Kind

The trio of exhibitions opening at the International Center of Photography this week couldn't be less alike. And that's the reason to visit them together: to see three masters' vastly different approaches to the medium. The emotional images in **Time of Change: Bruce Davidson, Civil Rights Photographs, 1961–65** document Davidson's 1961 journey with the Freedom Riders, who challenged segregation in the South, and his subsequent trips to Alabama and Mississippi. **Weegee's Trick Photography**, by contrast, is pure fun: The blood-and-guts tabloid photographer is represented by his later efforts, the humorous distortions and caricatures of well-known artworks and celebrities that he began in the late forties and continued to create until shortly before his death in 1968. As for **First Photographs: William Henry Fox Talbot and the Birth of Photography**, you will likely never see Talbot's *oeuvre* assembled in a large survey again. The show gathers the photography pioneer's sublime record of daily life at his estate in Wiltshire, England, and "photogenic drawings" of flowers and leaves, patterns of laces, and other subjects, many of which were among the world's first negative-to-positive prints. (December 13 through February 16; see "Photography.") E.N.

IT'S A STRETCH: Weegee's *Brigitte Bardot*, circa 1959.

Ground Rules Galleries are generally open Tuesday through Saturday, from between 10 and 11 to between 5 and 6. Stars (★) indicate our editors' recommendations.

PHOTOGRAPH © WEEGEE/INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES.

ings, sculpture, quilts, furniture, and pottery; through 1/5/03. • 45 W. 53rd St. (212-265-1040), Tues.–Sun. 10–6 (Fri. to 8); $9, $5 students and seniors.

American Museum of Natural History

★ "Einstein." The most comprehensive exhibition ever mounted on the life and theories of the scientist; through 8/31/03. • ★ "The Butterfly Conservatory: Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter." An annual exhibition, first presented in 1998, of 400 to 500 live tropical butterflies from Central, South, and North America housed in a walk-in vivarium that approximates the butterflies' natural habitat; through 5/26/03. • Central Park West at 79th St. (212-769-5100); daily 10–5:45 (on Fri., Rose Center is open to 8:45 for daily space shows); $12 suggested contribution, $9 students and seniors, $7 children.

Asia Society and Museum

★ "The Native Born: Contemporary Aboriginal Art From Ramingining, Australia." A traveling exhibition of Aboriginal bark paintings, weavings, and wood sculptures organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; through 1/5/03. • "China Refigured: The Art of Ah Xian With Selections From the Rockefeller Collection." Sculptures in porcelain, lacquer, and cloisonné by the Chinese Australian artist; through 2/9/03. • "From Court to Caravan: Chinese Tomb Sculptures From the Collection of Anthony M. Solomon"; through 2/9/03. • 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. (212-288-6400), Tues.–Sun. 11–6 (Fri. 11–9, free admission 6–9); $7, $5 students and seniors.

Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts

★ "Le Corbusier Before Le Corbusier: Applied Arts, Architecture, Painting, and Photography." Works made between 1907 and 1922 that show the architect, then a painter, gravitating toward architecture and design; Through 2/23/03. • 18 W. 86th St. (212-501-3000), Tues.–Sun. 11–5 (Thurs. to 8); $3, $2 students and seniors.

Bronx Museum of the Arts

★ "The Gift: Generous Offerings, Threatening Hospitality." An exhibit organized by Independent Curators International, of works in various media that focus on the giving and receiving of gifts, by 37 artists including Vito Acconci, Louise Bourgeois, Piero Manzoni, Yoko Ono, and Kiki Smith; through 3/2/03. • "Rhythms and Rituals That Feed My Spirit: A Project by Blondell Cummings." An installation using works from the museum's collection; through 3/3/03. • 1040 Grand Concourse, the Bronx (718-681-6000), Wed. noon–9, Thurs.–Sun. noon–6; $5, $3 students and seniors, Wed. free.

Brooklyn Museum of Art

★ "Exposed: The Victorian Nude." The first exhibit to survey the full range of representations of the nude during the reign of Queen Victoria, from 1837 to 1901, including works by Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Edward Burne-Jones, Frederic Leighton, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and others; through 1/5/03. • ★ "The Adventures of Hamza." Approximately 70 of the finest surviving paintings from the *Hamzanama*, a fourteen-volume manuscript portraying the exploits of Amir Hamza, an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, that was created by Persian and Indian artists and commissioned by the Indian Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) when he was still a teenager; through 1/26/03. • ★ "Judy Chicago: *The Dinner Party.*" The feminist sculptor's best-known work, given to the museum by the Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation, an installation consisting of a dinner table and 39 place settings representing 39 successful women, executed between 1974 and 1979 by some 400 women working as ceramicists, needleworkers, and china painters; through 2/9/03. • 200 Eastern Pkwy., Brooklyn (718-638-5000), Wed.–Fri. 10–5, Sat. 11–6 (till 11 P.M. on the first Sat. of every month), Sun. 11–6; $6, $3 students and seniors.

Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution

★ "New Hotels for Global Nomads." The first major exhibition to explore the hotel as architecture, interior design, and cultural phenomenon; through 3/2/03. • 2 E. 91st St. (212-849-8300), Wed., Thurs., Fri. 10–5, Sat. 10–6, Sun. noon–6, Tues. 10–9 (5–9, free admission); $8, $5 students and seniors.

Dia Center for the Arts

"Rosemarie Trockel: Spleen." A new suite of video projections that explore the meanings of "spleen" through the artist's feminist perspective; through 6/15/03. ★ "Jo Baer: The Minimalist Years, 1960–1975." The artist's first solo museum exhibition in the United States since 1975, of hard-edge minimal paintings and drawings made during the years she lived in New York City; through 6/15/03. • Jorge Pardo and Gerhard Richter: *Refraction.*" The former's design of Dia's ground floor is interwoven with the latter's paintings; through 6/15/03. • "*Diana Thater: Knots + Surfaces.*" A large-scale multi-projection video installation; through 3/29/03. • 548 W. 22nd St. (212-989-5566), Wed.–Sun. noon–6; $6, $3 students and seniors.

Drawing Center

★ "Abstract Tendencies." Abstract works on paper by Bandau, Dudek, Jensen, McShane, Pibal, Song, others; through 12/20. • 35 Wooster St. (212-219-2166), Tues.–Fri. 10–6, Sat. 11–6; donation suggested.

Frick Collection

★ "Masterpieces of European Painting From the Toledo Museum of Art." Twelve important works on loan from the Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio, by Piero di Cosimo, Jacopo Bassano, El Greco, Thomas Gainsborough, Camille Pissarro, and others; through 1/5/03. • 1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700); Tues.–Sat. 10–6 (Fri. to 8:45), Sun. 1–6; $12 adults, $8 seniors, $5 students; children under 10 not admitted.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

★ "Moving Pictures." Photographs and video works from the seventies to the present, drawn primarily from the museum's collection, by Marina Abramovic, Vito Acconci, Stan Douglas, Andreas Gursky, Bruce Nauman, and others; through 1/12/03. • ★ "Bill Viola: Going Forth by Day." A new five-part, projected digital image cycle that is experienced architecturally and explores themes of human existence; through 1/12/03. • 1071 Fifth Ave., at 88th St. (212-423-3500), Sat.–Wed. 10–5:45, Fri. 10–8 (Fri. 6–8, pay what you wish), closed Thurs.; $12, $8 students and seniors.

Japan Society

★ "Kazari: Decoration and Display in Japan, Fifteenth–Nineteenth Centuries." A survey of Japanese art that explores the concept and practice of *kazari*, the art of arranging objects and paintings and the principles governing their display, including works gathered from collections around the world; through 12/31. • 333 E. 47th St. (212-832-1155), Tues.–Fri. 11–6, Sat. and Sun. 11–5; $5, $3 students and seniors.

Jewish Museum

★ "Adolph Gottlieb." Paintings spanning the Abstract Expressionist's career from 1934 to 1973 and charting his evolution from his early representational easel paintings to his monumental abstract pictures; through 3/2/03. • ★ "The City of K.: Franz Kafka and Prague." Photographs, manuscripts, and books set in a series of multimedia environments that place the German-Jewish writer in the context of the city in which he grew up; through 1/5/03. • "Light x Eight: The Hanukkah Project 2002." Works that create or manipulate light, by LaVerdiere, Miyajima, Moss, Parreno, Phillips, Schachter, Veilhan, Villareal; through 2/2/03. • 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St. (212-423-3200), Mon., Tues., Wed. 11–5:45; Thurs. 11–8 (Thurs. after 5, pay what you wish), Fri. 11–3, Sun. 10–5:45; $8, $5.50 students and seniors.

Metropolitan Museum of Art

★ "Théodore Chassériau (1819–1856): The Unknown Romantic." The first retrospective of paintings and works on paper since 1933 by this French artist, a precocious disciple of Ingres; through 1/5/03. ★ "Richard Avedon: Portraits." A retrospective of the preeminent photographer's portraiture, including images of well-known writers, artists, actors, military leaders, and politicians; a series of portraits of his father in the years just prior to his death; and his portrayals of westerners from the series The American West; through 1/5. • ★ "The Legacy of Ghengis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353." More than 200 objects, including illustrated manuscripts, decorative arts, and architectural decoration; through 2/16/03. • ★ "Blithe Spirit: The Windsor Set." A collection of French couture donated to the museum in 1946 that includes Chanels, Lanvins, Vionnets, and Schiaparellis, and captures the elegance of thirties café society; through 2/9/03. ★ "The Prints of Vija Celmins." Images of ocean surfaces, desert floors, and star-filled night skies that eschew conventional composition; through 12/29 • "A Very Private Collection: Janice H. Levin's Impressionist Pictures." Some 35 works that graced the late collector's Fifth Avenue apartment, by Bonnard, Monet, Morisot, Pissarro, Renoir, and others; through 2/9/03. • "Genesis: Ideas of Origin in African Sculpture." Forty *ci wara* antelope headdresses of the Bamana people, and other masterpieces from across sub-Saharan Africa inspired by distinct myths of origin; through 4/13/03. • 1000 Fifth Ave., at 82nd St. (212-879-5500); Tues.–Thurs. and Sun. 9:30–5:30, Fri. and Sat. 9:30–9; $10 contribution, $5 students and seniors. The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park (212-923-3700); Tues.–Sun. 9:30–4:45 (closes at 5:15 between April and September); $12, $7 students and seniors.

MoMA QNS

★ "Drawing Now: Eight Propositions." Approximately 250 drawings by a diverse group of 26 young artists from Europe, Asia, and the Americas; through 1/6/03. • "The Changing of the Avant-Garde: Visionary Architectural Drawings From the Howard Gilman Collection." 173 architectural drawings of group of 200 that were given to the museum by the Howard Gilman Foundation, by Eisenman, Hejduk, Koolhaas, Maki, Sottsass, others; through 1/6/03. • "Masterworks of German Expressionism." Prints from the museum's collection, by Max Beckmann, Käthe Kollwitz, Ernnst Ludwig Kirchner, Max Pechstein, others; through 2/24/03. • 33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400), Thurs.–Mon. 10–5 (Fri. to 7:45); $12, $8.50 students and seniors.

Morgan Library

★ "The Thaw Collection: Master Drawings and Oil Sketches, Acquisitions Since 1994." Works collected by Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw since 1994 that they have promised to the Morgan Library, by Carpaccio, Degas, Morandi, Redon, Seurat, and others; through 1/12. • "Stuart Davis: Art and Theory, 1920–31." Works on paper, the artist's earliest known diary, and a sketchbook; through12/15. • "Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol.*" A special holiday presentation of Dickens's original manuscript; through 1/12/03. • 29 E. 36th St. (212-685-0008), Tues.–Thurs. 10:30–5, Fri. 10:30–8, Sat. 10:30–6, Sun. noon–6; $8, $6 students and seniors.

★ El Museo del Barrio

"The (S) Files 2002: The Selected Files." The museum's biennial showcase of works by New York–based Latino and Latin American artists; through 2/16/03. • 1230 Fifth Ave., at 104th St. (212-831-7272), Wed.–Sun. 11–5; $5, $3 students and seniors.

Museum of Contemporary Arts and Design

"From the Kilns of Denmark: Contemporary Danish Ceramics." A survey of ceramics produced in Denmark since 1982; through 1/5/02. • "Elegant Fantasy: The Jewelry of Arline Fisch." A survey of the jewelry artist's collars and body ornaments, which incorporate such textile techniques as weaving and crochet; through 1/5/03. • 40 W. 53rd St. (212-956-3535), daily 10–6, Thurs. 10–8 (pay what you wish 6–8); $7.50, $4 students and seniors.

Museum of Jewish Heritage

"Yahrzeit." A selection of photographs and artifacts relating to the World Trade Center attack in observance of its first anniversary; through 1/5/02. • 18 First Place, Battery Park City (212-968-1800), Sun.–Wed 10–5:45, Thurs. 10–8, Fri. and the eve of Jewish holidays 10–3; $7, $5 students and seniors.

Museum of the City of New York

"Horn & Hardart's Automat." Photographs, ephemera, and artifacts—including original Horn & Hardart furniture and vending machines—demonstrating the chain's important place in New York's culture; through 3/16. • "The Croton Aqueduct: Illustrations by Fayette B. Tower." Highlights from a recent gift to the museum of ink drawings, prints, and letters by Fayette B. Tower (1817–1857), an assistant engineer on the Croton Aqueduct project; through 4/6/03. • ★ "Richard Rodgers' Broadway." A centennial celebration of the legendary composer's birth, featuring photographs, sheet music, personal items, and ephemera from the museum's Theater Collection; through 1/5/03. • "The Day Our World Changed: Children's Art of 9/11." Eighty-three works of art made by New York area children in response to the events of September 11, 2001; through 1/19/03. • 1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd St. (212-534-1672), Wed.-Sat. 10-5, Sun. 1-5; $5 suggested contribution, $4 students and seniors.

Museum of the Fashion Institute of Technology

★ "Scaasi: Exuberant Fashion." A selection of 70 evening gowns and cocktail dresses by the designer known for his use of rich, opulently adorned fabrics, off-the-shoulder necklines, and strapless dresses; through 1/4/03. • ★ "Femme Fatale: Fashion and Visual Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris." The first exhibition to explore the sexual politics of women's fashion in turn-of-the-century Paris, where courtesans and actresses set the latest styles, including fashions by Doucet, Pacquin, Worth, and others; through 1/25/03. • Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (212-217-7642), Tues.-Fri. noon-8, Sat. 10-5; free.

National Academy of Design

★ "Color & Ecstacy: The Art of Hyman Bloom." A retrospective of paintings and drawings by a Latvian-born artist who had his first retrospective at the Whitney Museum in 1954 and whose work reflected his preoccupations with light, color, the macabre, and spirituality; through 12/29. • 1083 Fifth Ave., at 89th St. (212-369-4880), Wed. and Thurs. noon-5, Fri., Sat. and Sun. 11-6; $8; $4.50 students and seniors.

National Museum of the American Indian

"The New Old World: Antilles—Living Beyond the Myth." Photographs of the Taino and Carib peoples of the Caribbean by Marisol Villanueva; through 3/21/03. • ★ "Great Masters of Mexican Folk Art From the Collection of Fomento Cultural Banamex." Works by contemporary master craft artists from all 31 states of the Mexican Republic; through 3/15/03. • 1 Bowling Green (212-514-3700), 10-5 daily, Thurs. 10-8; free.

Neue Galerie

★ "Dagobert Peche and the Wiener Werkstätte." The first comprehensive exhibit of drawings, furniture, jewelry, ceramics, fabrics, and wallpaper by the eclectic Viennese designer (1887–1923); through 2/10/03. • 1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200), Fri. 11-9, Sat., Sun., Mon. 11-6; $10, $7 students and seniors.

New Museum of Contemporary Art

★ "Carroll Dunham." The first major museum survey of paintings by the American artist whose combination of biomorphism, cartooning, and abstraction have played a pivotal role in synthesizing abstraction with representation; through 2/2/03. • 583 Broadway, near Prince St. (212-219-1222), Tue.-Sun. noon-6, Thurs. noon-8 ($3 admission Thurs. 6-8); $6, $3 students and seniors.

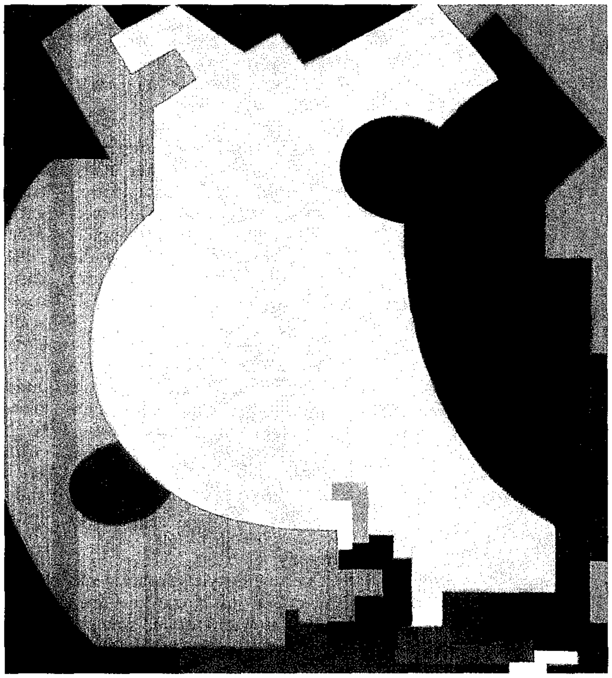
New York Public Library

★ "New York Eats Out." Menus, photographs, prints, magazine covers, and other items chronicling the history of New York dining from the collection of the library and on loan from the private holdings of restaurateurs, chefs, and others, selected by the New York *Times* food critic William Grimes; through 3/1. • "Urban Neighbors: Images of New York City Wildlife." Historic and contemporary illustrated books, photographs, engravings, maps, original art, and other works from the library's collections depicting fauna from the five boroughs; through 2/1/03. • Fifth Ave. and 42nd St. (212-869-8089), Tues. and Wed. 11-7:30, Thurs.-Sat. 10-6; free.

Talent

Living Color

At first glance, the quirky, interlocking geometric shapes of **Laurie Fendrich**'s paintings, at Gary Snyder Fine Art, suggest a riff on works by Russian Constructivists and American Modernists. Look again, however, and you'll see that Fendrich's compositions are not ironic appropriations but a playful hybrid and continuation of both movements. If you think you've seen Fendrich's deliciously offbeat color combinations and vaguely cartoonish shapes before, you've been eating well—they're on the walls of the Ritz-Carlton's Atelier restaurant. (December 12–January 25; see "Galleries: Solos.")



PLAIN GEOMETRY: Laurie Fendrich's *Hot Dog,* 1999.

New-York Historical Society

★ "Portrait of the Art World: A Century of *ARTnews* Photographs." A celebration of the centenary of America's oldest art magazine through a selection of 100 of its most memorable portraits of artists; through 1/5/03. • ★ "Freedom: A History of US." An exhibition pairing original broadsides, manuscripts, and imprints from the Gilder Lehrman Collection with archival photographs from the Meserve-Kunhardt Collection; through 1/26/03. • ★ "New York Diary: The Collages of John Evans." Collages made daily by the artist in his diary from the early sixties through December 31, 2000; 12/17–3/9/03. • "Gouverneur Morris Treasures." Objects, furniture, and correspondence given to the New-York Historical Society after the statesman's death in 1816; through 1/20/03. • 2 W. 77th St. (212-873-3400); Tues.-Sun. 11-6; $5, $3 seniors and children.

P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center

★ "Video Acts: Single-Channel Works From the Collections of Pamela and Richard Kramlich and New Art Trust." Performance-based artworks in video format by Ambramovic and Ulay, Vito Acconci, Gilbert and George, Jonas, Nauman, Paik, Viola, Wegman, others; through 4/30/03. • ★ "Building Structures." Artworks made from wood, cardboard, plastic, plywood, plaster, and other building materials, by Cape, Guyton, McBride, Schnitger, Tse, Weiner, others; through 1/31/03. • "Arnold Mesches: FBI Files." Collages and paintings about the artist's own experiences during the Depression, World War II, the Cold War, the McCarthy "Red Scare" era; through 2/28/03. • 22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084), Thurs.-Mon. noon-6; $5 suggested donation.

Studio Museum in Harlem

★ "Gary Simmons." A survey of the artist's work from the past seven years, including erasure drawings, photographs, sculptures, and videos; through 1/5/03. • 144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500), Wed., Thurs., Sat., and Sun. noon-6, Fri. noon-8; $5, $3 students and seniors.

Whitney Museum of American Art

★ "The Quilts of Gee's Bend." Approximately 70 quilts made between the twenties and the nineties by the women of Gee's Bend, a small town in rural Alabama; through 3/2/03. • ★ "An American Legacy, A Gift." Eighty-seven works of postwar American art that were given to the museum by fifteen members of its board of trustees, including works by Close, De Feo, Frankenthaler, Johns, Kelly, Kline, Newman, Pollock, Rauschenberg, Rothko, Ryman, Twombly, and Warhol; through 1/26/03. • ★ "Lorna Simpson: *31*." A film installation that tracks a month in the life of an unknown woman in a grid of 31 small video screens as she moves through her apartment, the street, the office, and various recreational spaces; through 1/26/03. "Lorna Simpson: Cameos and Appearances." New photographs from an ongoing series of silhouetted and obscured portraits; through 1/26/03. • ★ "Sanctuaries: The Last Works of John Hejduk." Drawings and models by the visionary American architect who explored an allegorical, carnivalesque mode of architecture; through 1/5/03. • "Tom Burr: *Deep Purple*." A re-imagining of Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* that calls into question the past, present, and future of public art; through 1/5/03. • "Ben Rubin and Mark Hansen: Listening Post." An installation exploring the content, scale, and immediacy of communication on the Internet; 12/17–3/9/03. • 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St. (212-570-3676); Tues.-Thurs., Sat., Sun. 11-6, Fri. 1-9 (pay what you wish every Fri. 6-9); $12, $9.50 students, seniors, and groups of fifteen or more.

Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris

★ "Outer City, Inner Space: Teresita Fernandez, Stephen Hendee, and Esther Partegas." New site-specific sculptural works by three artists who explore architectural and conceptual space; through 1/3/03. • "Haluk Akakçe: Illusion of the First Time." An ethereal environment of illusional wall paintings, abstract video projections, and dimensional sound elements; through 1/10/03. • 120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (917-663-2550), Mon.-Fri. 11-6 (Thurs. till 7:30); free.

Auctions

Christie's

12/11 at 10 and 2 and 12/12 at 10: "Fine and Rare Wines." On view from 12/7. 12/12 at 10 and 2: "Antiquities." On view from 12/8. 12/13 at 10: "Ancient Jewelry." On view from 12/9. • 20 Rockefeller Plaza (212-636-2000).

Doyle

12/11 at 10: "Important Estate Jewelry." On view through 12/10. • 175 E. 87th St. (212-427-2730).

Phillips de Pury & Luxembourg

12/11 at 2: "20th- and 21st-Century Design Art." On view through 12/10. • 3 W. 57th St. (212-940-1200).

Sotheby's

12/11 at 10:15 and 2: "Antiquities." On view from 12/6. 12/12 at 10:15 and 2: "Arcade Jewelry." On view from 12/6. 12/13 at 10:15: "Fine Books and Manuscripts, Including Americana." On view from 12/7. 12/14 at 9:30: "Wine." 12/14 at 10:15 and 2: "Planet Hollywood, Selections From the Vault." On view from 12/8. • 1334 York Ave., at 72nd St. (212-606-7000).

Swann Galleries

12/12 at 10:30: "Maps, Atlases, & Decorative Prints." On view from 12/8. • 104 E. 25th St. (212-254-4710).

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF GARY SNYDER FINE ART.

Restaurants

cue

Edited by Robin Raisfeld
& Rob Patronite

New and Noteworthy

★ Aix
It took only the turn of a key for Aix to become hotter than Dennis Quaid's stolen kiss in *Far From Heaven*. Yet, unlike Tom Valenti's big-hearted bistro cuisine at nearby Ouest, chef Didier Virot's precise counterpoint cooking in this ingeniously laid-out neo-brownstone does little to play to the locals. None are leaving appearing the least bit slighted. And after you savor Virot's tomato tart perfumed with basil and Parmesan and foie gras in pear coulis, neither will you. • 2398 Broadway, at 88th St. (212-874-7400). (M–E)

Assenzio
Despite being banned in the U.S. and France, absinthe hasn't lost its café-society cachet, if restaurant names like L'Absinthe and Opaline are any indication. And now, from the owners of Osteria del Sole, comes Assenzio ("absinthe" in Italian), a rustic East Village wine bar where the most addictive thing on the premises is pane carasau, the crackly Sardinian flatbread served with everything from carpaccio and vitello tonnato to the pasta of the day. • 205 E. 4th St. (212-677-9466). (M) ($)

Biscuit
Chicken and waffles and Cheddar grits are mainstays on chef Josh Cohen's menu at Relish, the gorgeously restored Williamsburg diner. But that wasn't enough to satisfy his passion for Carolina barbecue, so in his spare time, he opened an eighteen-seat Prospect Heights joint of his own, where he goes whole hog, from ribs and pulled pork to barbecued-bologna sandwiches. The namesake buttermilk biscuits emerge from the oven twice daily. • 367 Flatbush Ave., near Sterling Pl., Brooklyn (718-398-2227). (I–M) ($)

★ Burger Joint
The idea behind this secret spot—hidden behind a Wizard of Oz curtain in the lobby of Le Parker Meridien hotel—is to give tourists a cheap, no-frills alternative to room service, and stressed-out natives a place to decompress. To that end, the menu is brief: draft beer, crisp fries, fudgy brownies, and $4.50 burgers that hit the spot, whether you've just flown in from Tokyo or trudged over from your office across the street. • 119 W. 56th St. (212-245-5000). (I)

CurryShop
Named for the cast-iron pan it's cooked in and served traditionally with nan bread instead of cutlery, the Birmingham balti has become as inherently British as fish and chips. So it makes perfect sense that expat Christopher Sell would open the CurryShop directly next door to his ChipShop, advancing his one-man British invasion of Park Slope. The mix-and-match menu offers a range of sauces, from korma to vindaloo, and Anglo appetizers like coronation chicken salad. • 383 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-832-7701). (M) ($)

Dos Caminos
Stephen Hanson has made a habit—and a successful career—out of opening big, bold, budget-conscious restaurants. In this case, he adds margaritas and all sorts of assiduously researched Mexican fare to the mix. With 150 tequilas, 275 seats, and a south-of-the-border design scheme, he aims to spice up the state of Manhattan Mexican, from the humblest taco to the most complex mole. • 373 Park Avenue So., nr. 27th St. (212-294-1000). (M–E)

OPENINGS

Bella Via
Calling all thin-crust-pizza aficionados: The margherita pies that emerge from the coal-fired brick oven at this new Queens trattoria are worth a detour to or from MoMA. The rest of the menu covers familiar Italian-American territory (fried calamari, penne alla vodka, veal scallopini), and for now it's BYOB. • 47-46 Vernon Boulevard, Long Island City (718-361-7510). (M)

★ Fresh
After supplying fresh fish to star chefs like Alain Ducasse and Gray Kunz, the owners of Early Morning Seafood have opened a Tribeca restaurant of their own, turning their clients into the competition. Former Gotham chef de cuisine Martin Burge makes the most of getting first dibs on the day's catch with lightly crunchy fried Ipswich clams, melting "Kobe beef" of bluefin toro, and an array of "prime cuts" like baby-back halibut ribs steamed in kelp. • 105 Reade St. (212-406-1900). (E)

General Store
Everything on the menu, from the Wisconsin cheese in the ham sandwich to the Maine lobster in the potpie, is American in origin at this combination restaurant–bar–ice-cream parlor–flower shop–bakery, where world-weary Manhattanites pledge culinary allegiance to an idealized version of middle America. Wash it all down with twelve American beers on tap and 30 American wines by the glass. • 29 Ave. B (212-254-0055). (M)

★ Gonzo
Chef-owner Vincent Scotto's cooked his way downtown, from Fresco to Scopa to this Village brownstone, where he's serving classics culled from his Italian-American repertoire like grilled-onion salad, Venetian-style bar snacks called cicchetti, salumi and cheese plates, and hearty entrées and sides meant to be shared. Don't miss his unbelievably great grilled pizzas topped with everything from cumin-scented ricotta to mashed potatoes. • 140 W. 13th St. (212-645-4606). (M)

★ The Kati Roll Company
Somewhere between Lebanese-style shawarma and wrap sandwiches, the rolls at this single-item specialist make superb street food. Kati means "skewer," on which most of the flavorful marinated fillings (chicken or beef tikka, paneer-cheese cubes and peppers) are cooked before being rolled up in a wok-griddled paratha. Unda rolls have a layer of egg cooked onto the paratha, and aloo masala is the spiced potato mixture familiar to fans of dosas. • 99 Macdougal St. (212-420-6517). (I)

Kitchen 22
Out like a light: In one fell swoop, owner Charlie Palmer has dispensed with Alva's Edison-inspired lightbulb theme and reconceived his Flatiron-district property with walnut beams, vanilla walls, and sea-green-and-blue-hued fabrics and banquettes. The menu, too, has been overhauled, edited down to a choice of five appetizers, five entrées, and five desserts, available only as a $25 three-course prix fixe. • 36 E. 22nd St. (212-228-4399). (M)

★ L'Impero
We can't imagine a better upscale Italian-food bargain than Scott Conant's $48 four-course prix fixe at this sophisticated new Tudor City restaurant, where he synthesizes elegance and rusticity in dishes like duck-and-foie gras agnolotti and roast baby goat. Vicente Wolf (also a partner) is responsible for the polished, roomy design, and managing partner Chris Cannon masterminded the user-friendly wine list, which offers great values on daily-changing house carafes. • 45 Tudor City Pl. (212-599-5045). (E)

Lozoo
This Houston Street newcomer juxtaposes strikingly modern décor with "traditional Chinese haute cuisine" like Maryland crab in whipped egg-white cloud, barbecued sirloin with shredded sesame tofu, and confit of sweet-and-spicy crispy eel. One of the owners has Kelley & Ping, Kin Khao, and Obeca Li on her estimable résumé; her partner draws inspiration from a wealth of memorable meals at his grandmother's table in Shanghai. • 140 W. Houston St. (646-602-8888). (M)

Ground Rules These listings are a selective guide to the city's restaurants, some *New York* advertisers among them. Stars (★) indicate our critics' recommendations. The price guide, admittedly imperfect, is as follows: (E) = expensive; (M) = moderate; (I) = inexpensive. Restaurants listed accept *all* major credit cards, except where noted; ($) = cash only; "AE only" indicates that American Express is the only accepted card.

Lunchbox Food Co.
Despite the gleaming angular façade, terrazzo floor, and vinyl booths, Lunchbox is a diner in only the most abstract sense. If chocolate-truffle lollipops aren't enough of a clue that you haven't landed at Mel's, then check out the French sea salt on the tables. Need further proof? How about the organic beef in the terrific burger, homemade doughnuts, and old-fashioned bagels in iconoclastic flavors like orange zest and Parmesan? • 357 West St. (646-230-9466). (I–M)

Pierres Roulantes
After a brief stint as a Mexican restaurant, the legendarily celebrity-stuffed Marylou's space has been remade as a French bistro by the owner of the Turtle Bay wine bar Le Bateau Ivre. The name means "rolling stones"; the mirror-lined dining room is decorated with vintage album covers signed by Mick and Keith; and the kitchen keeps rock-star hours, serving shellfish platters, onion soup, and cassoulet till 4 A.M. • 21 W. 9th St. (212-995-2168). (M)

★ RM
Rick Moonen made a name for himself at Oceana, and now he's hoping that name—or at least those initials—will induce his customers to follow him six blocks north to new digs, where, as chef-partner, he's as determined as ever to serve sustainably fished, environmentally correct seafood. Dinner is a $55 three-course prix fixe and features entrées like halibut "confit," pistachio-crusted skate, and pancetta-wrapped wild striped bass. • 33 E. 60th St. (212-319-3800). (E)

★ Sciuscià
The younger, loungier sequel to Il Gattopardo brings some of its predecessor's Southern Italian signatures to a subterranean space below the Hotel Giraffe. But besides sautéed escarole and Neapolitan meat loaf, the broad Mediterranean menu makes room for a terrific kibbeh appetizer, a Córdoba salad, and, at lunch, a $22.50 daily changing *piatto unico*, or European-style bento box. • 365 Park Ave. So., at 26th St. (212-213-4008). (M–E)

Serafina Sandro
The big guy in the jungle-print gym pants is back. Not Joey Buttafuoco, but Sandro Fioriti, the celebrated Roman chef. After his Chelsea restaurant abruptly closed, he's returned to the Upper East Side, the neighborhood where he first blazed a spaghettini al limone trail nearly twenty years ago. And his signature dishes like ravioli filled with sea-urchin roe and roast suckling pig—not to mention those pants—are still attracting a lot of attention. • 38 E. 58th St. (212-832-8888). (M)

Terrance Brennan's
Dairy king Terrance Brennan has filled the void Larry Forgione left when he checked out of the Benjamin hotel. In a modern twist on the traditional chop house, meat and seafood are accessorized with your choice of sauces and butters; even the salt-baked potato comes with a condiment tray. Prime rib and chateaubriand for two are carved tableside. Plus flaky gougeres, onion soup, and cheeses straight from Artisanal's cave. • 565 Lexington Ave., at 50th St. (212-715-2400). (E)

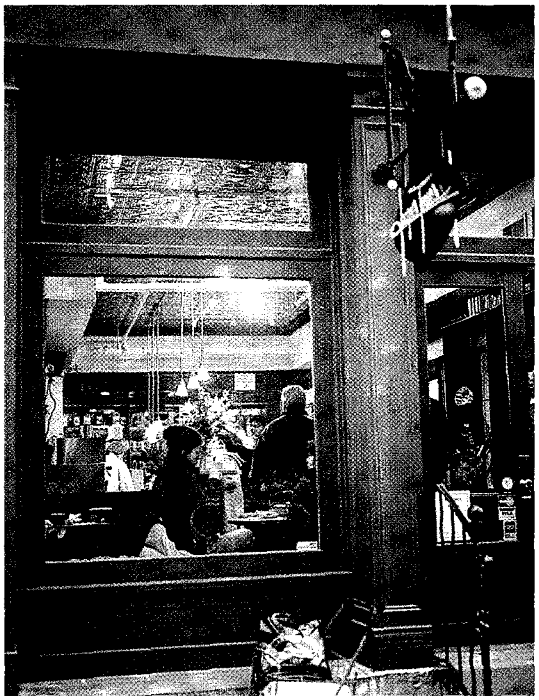
Voyage
The rum-soaked former premises of Caribe have been aired out, spruced up, and graced with a modern

Shopping

Success Is Sweet

When Jacques Torres opened his chocolate factory in Dumbo, he didn't expect many retail customers—and last month, he had to double the size of his adjacent shop to accommodate the crowds. The new, improved Jacques Torres Chocolate has twice as much display space for his expanding product line, and a marble-topped hot-cocoa bar where he'll soon add a few new flavors to his beloved repertory (hazelnut and coffee are strong contenders). Still, it's doubtful the extra square footage will suffice—especially on Saturdays, when hordes descend for a taste of whatever Torres is inspired to bake that day. A clique of crafty customers has even figured out exactly what time the pithiviers emerge from the oven and how long they take to cool, and arrives accordingly, proving just how cutthroat the confectionery world can be. (66 Water Street, Brooklyn; 718-875-9772.)

CANDYLAND: Jacques Torres Chocolate in Brooklyn.



American menu that borrows liberally from the southern and Latin American larders in a full-fat (but quite refined) attack of baby back ribs, fried baby chicken with pickled okra, curried fried oysters, and roast pork with ham-hock-stuffed plantains. Other southern comforts: a tea lounge up front and boiled peanuts at the bar. • 117 Perry St. (212-255-9191). (M-E)

Manhattan

Lower New York

★ aKa Cafe
Another funky little place from the 71 Clinton Fresh Food folks. This one features a clever, inexpensive small-plates menu with nods toward the neighborhood and its suppliers. The perfectly flaky braised-pork empanada is superb; oyster soup comes with Streits's matzo on the side; and the pressed chopped-hanger steak slider on a bialy with Gus's pickle slices and onions is the best thing to happen to that onion bun since Kossar. • 49 Clinton St. (212-979-6096). (I)

Café Lebowitz
Brian McNally's Nolita take on the *fin de siècle* Viennese *kaffeehaus* is more French than Austrian, and more McNally than either. Which is to say, it possesses a crew of impossibly slim belly-baring gamines; a star-studded clientele that included, at one recent brunch, a bespectacled Robert De Niro; and a crowd-pleasing bistro menu of burgers, croques monsieur, and steak-frites, not to mention the spectacular graham-cracker-crusted "Lebowitz cheesecake," named, like the café, in honor of humorist Fran. • 14 Spring St (212-219-2399). (I-M)

Delmonico's
Eat with the Big Boys at this sprawling, beautifully restored New York City icon. Start the feast the way Diamond Jim would have, with oysters Rockefeller and clams Casino, and end it with baked Alaska; in between there's lobster Newburg, rack of lamb, and, of course, the classic Delmonico's steak. And don't forget your jacket—or your wallet. • 56 Beaver St. (212-509-1144). (E)

Ecco
Old-world charm, an excellent seasonal antipasto, and classically prepared pastas, veal chops, lobster fra diavolo, and osso buco. Very cozy narrow booths line the east wall, and tile floors take you back to the Gilded Age. Live piano music on Friday and Saturday night. • 124 Chambers St. (212-227-7074). (M)

☆ The Harrison
With its long, bustling bar, commodious beamy interior, and friendly neighborhood vibe, the Red Cat's Jimmy Bradley and Danny Abrams's hot spot feels like it's been part of the local landscape for years. There are all sorts of dining options—you can spend a week snarfing the spicy fries—but we like the big dishes best: the crispy chicken served on a fat mattress of scallion mashed potatoes, calf's liver smothered in a sweet sherry sauce, and the house shell steak drizzled with crisps of pancetta. • 355 Greenwich St. (212-274-9310). (M)

★ Nobu
There is not another experience like it in town. Nobu Matsuhisa is a chef of such wondrous originality that nothing on his menu is merely as it reads. Each dish reinvents your definition of what it should taste like. Teensy oysters make your eyes pop. Bonito soothes the throat like sable. Seaweed sparkles. The fake trees aren't necessary. Two bites and you're in Eden. • 105 Hudson St. (212-219-0500). (M-E)

★ Oliva
We might have missed a Jimmy Choo or two under the tiny, painted tables. But it seems that Oliva is full of youngish dressed-for-comfort East Villagers here for the fabulous Basque cooking, not for a teeny martini and a lettuce leaf. Don't miss the clams piperrada, ribboned with red peppers, and the pintxos plate, a collection of savory two-bite tapas. Share the txangurro (stuffed crab) or tender calamari bravas to start, then shrimp, mussels, clams, and hake in a sea-tinged tomato bath. As the evening progresses, soft jazz and flamenco get more electronic and the bar heats up. • 161 E. Houston St. (212-228-4143). (M)

☆ Omen
The most singularly uncommon Japanese meal you can clear your senses with is to be found at this rustic home to Kyoto-style country cooking. The food looks coarse—little bowls with mackerel and daikon radish, or a quail egg oozing over a chunk of toro—and the first swallow is likely to be eerie and sharp. But the aftertaste provokes instantaneous acceptance followed by a craving for more. • 113 Thompson St. (212-925-8923). (M-E) AE only

Below 14th Street, East

☆ BondSt
The crowd is too cool, the rooms too cozy, the waiters way too pretty. No way is this anywhere you're going to get chirashi worth much more than a can of Bumble Bee. Boy, are you about to be surprised. With food this fresh, original, and vibrantly spiced, the kitchen can easily take on most traditional midtown sushi houses and wouldn't have to walk out of a room backwards if Nobu's troops were in attendance. • 6 Bond St. (212-777-2500). (M-E)

★ Flor's Kitchen
Flor Villazan's family recipes are the South American equivalent of its surrounding neighborhood's Ukrainian comfort food: solid, soulful, and filling. You could easily make a meal of appetizers, like spongy arepas stuffed with chicken or scrambled eggs (or, this being the East Village, tofu and vegetables); Jamaican pattylike empanadas criollas; and the deliciously sweet cachapa, which arrives under a blanket of melting mild white cheese. • 149 First Ave. (212-387-8949). (I)

★ Gnocco Caffe
Co-owner Pierluigi Palazzo named this café after the traditional Modenese snack of crispy, puffy fried dough, usually served with prosciutto di Parma. But just to complicate matters, the gently priced menu also offers two versions of gnocchetti (an entirely different, equally delicious thing), plus well-dressed, unusually fresh salads and an unassuming pork tenderloin lavished with Parmesan shavings and an aged-balsamic emulsion. • 337 E. 10th St. (212-677-1913). (I) ($)

★ Lil' Frankie's Pizza
The irresistible offspring of Frank is distinguished by its custom-built brick oven, a tool used to sublime effect on everything from torpedo-size eggplants and lasagne alla Bolognese to whole fish and terrific thin-crust pizza. The earthy fava-bean soup teeters deliciously on the edge of oversaltiness, but cut it with a juice glass of Montepulciano, or get your vegetables the traditional way—in the unfailingly fresh Lil' Frankie's house salad. • 19 First Ave. (212-420-4900). (I-M)

Osso Buco
Popular Italian restaurant on a much-traveled Village corridor serving family-style portions of the eponymous house specialty, Caesar salad, fried calamari, and T-bone steak. • 88 University Pl. (212-645-4525). Also, 1662 Third Ave., at 93rd St. (426-5422). (M)

★ Prune
There's not a wrinkled plum in sight. But chef Gabrielle Hamilton's childhood nickname indicates the sort of unpretentious home cooking at which she excels, a grab bag of eccentric, multicultural influences that is, at heart, American—as any place whose bar menu includes Triscuits and sardines alongside serrano ham with fresh figs must be. The menu gives as prominent placement to vegetables like creamed corn and roasted beets as to entrées like pastrami duck breast with a rye-flavored, fried-shallot omelet. An inspired brunch menu outdoes even dinner for sheer quirky genius and originality. • 54 E. 1st St. (212-677-6221). (M)

Telephone Bar & Grill
This lively East Village fixture was serving classic pub grub like shepherd's pie and fish and chips long before

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PHOTOGRAPH BY PATRIK RYTIKANGAS.

anyone thought of British comfort food as trendy. • 149 Second Ave. (212-529-5000). (I–M)

★ *Washington Park*
Not since Dolly Levi descended the steps of the Harmonia Gardens has a return to a restaurant been so boisterously chronicled. The reason there is cause for high-kicking and strutting is that rather than bring us back down memory lane, eighties icon Jonathan Waxman reveals that his passion for market produce like *dragon beans and ramps and his breezy touch in dropping* them in pastas and alongside juicy duck confit is as vital as ever. • 24 Fifth Ave. (212-529-4400). (M–E)

Below 14th Street, West

★ Annisa
Deft designer tricks like a raised dining space in soothing shades of off-white give this room a dignified grandeur, and the food backs it up. Chef Anita Lo finds inspiration everywhere from Shanghai (soup dumplings crowned with seared foie gras) to Provence (chickpea-stuffed zucchini blossoms with tomato and saffron sauces). The name means "women" in Arabic; *note the gender-specific wine list.* • 13 Barrow St. (212-741-6699). (M–E)

Burrito Loco
The house burrito comes with three sauces and a choice of beef, pork, or chicken. There's a rendition stuffed with roasted lamb and lots of vegetarian options. And even though it could probably survive just *by serving the hordes of marauding college students* nachos and tacos, the festive cantina keeps things interesting with cactus salad and shrimp seviche. • 166 W. 4th St. (212-675-1977). (I–M)

★ Deborah—Life Love Food
Deborah's is one of those seemingly generic menus—meat loaf, pork chops—that provoke some *hesitation outside the restaurant. Just move it inside.* You'll be glad you did once you tuck into some seriously fresh, just-tweaked-enough American comfort food: a juicy cheeseburger with some of the best hand-cut fries in town; beer-battered fish and chips to make a Brit blush; and a cool Key-lime tart that even Brooklyn's Steve's would tout. • 43 Carmine St. (212-242-2606). (M)

★ Paradou
There's a feeling of garlic-soaked bonhomie at this cozy bistro *à vins named after the bucolic Provençal* village of Le Paradou ("paradise" in the local dialect) and dedicated to serving wine-friendly food like ripe cheeses, charcuterie, tartines, crêpes, and hearty rustic pressed sandwiches like the one of duck rillettes, capers, roasted tomatoes, and shallots. In warm weather, a garden with a pétanque court provides extra seating, and behind that, *in a delicious bit of Manhattan real-estate* irony, lurks Hell (the lounge). • 8 Little W. 12th St. (212-463-8345). (I–M)

★ Peanut Butter & Co.
Smooth or chunky is only the beginning: Savor the sticky stuff 21 different ways at this kitschy café, where you're transported back to elementary school with one bite *of "ants on a log," celery sticks slathered with the* peanut butter of your choice and studded with raisins. Request your Elvis (grilled peanut butter, banana, honey, bacon) on whole wheat if you must, though we're certain the King would disapprove. • 240 Sullivan St. (212-677-3995). (I–M)

Tio Pepe
Can't decide between Mexican and Spanish? This Greenwich Village kitchen has been doling out both for over three decades, and to judge by the liquor supply, the bar's been stocking a new brand of tequila every year. That sort of variety contributes to the general merriment, as do a heaping paella Valenciana and bicultural tapas like garlic shrimp and nachos, which *many seem to enjoy in the skylit garden room.* • 168 W. 4th St. (212-242-9338). (I–M)

Titou
Titou is as bewitchingly charming as the quiet tree-lined West Village street upon which it resides. Bistro staples like an herbed-goat-cheese tart, roast chicken, and steak-frites are well done and moderately priced. The tiny sidewalk café is a lovely spot to while a way a summer evening. • 259 W. 4th St. (212-691-9359). (M)

Village
After years of pushing steak-frites at places like Odeon and Quatorze, Stephen Lyle has more than mastered the bistro idiom. At Village, Lyle widens his range in dishes like shrimp-and-lentil samosas and an oyster pan roast with chipotles; for more buttoned-down bistro tastes there's a warm frisée salad, steak au poivre and potatoes sauteed in duck fat. • 62 W. 9th St. (212-505-3355). (M)

14th–42nd Streets, East Side

★ AQ Café
Scandinavia House's sleek concession run by Aqua*vit and its star chef, Marcus Samuelsson, provides* a gastronomic introduction to Nordic culture. On the menu: textbook tender Swedish meatballs, a superb smorgasbord plate, and salmon lasagna crowned with ascending dollops of tomato salsa and salmon salad for which Samuelsson's mother country should award him a Nobel Prize. • 58 Park Avenue, at 38th St. (212-847-9745). (I)

★ Campagna
The far-too-cautious interior is woefully inappropriate preparation for the whoops of joy that erupt when patrons sample Mark Strausman's gleefully game sense of Italian cuisine. The lobster broth in his cacciucco is a blast. And his grandma's lasagna makes you sorry you *never met her.* • 24 E. 21st St. (212-460-0900). (E)

★ craftbar
With only six daily entrées—two fish, two meat, and two pastas—craftbar might be Tom Colicchio and chef Marco Canora's laid-back answer to those still anxiety-stricken by Craft's hands-on menu. But before you get around to fish stew, braised rabbit, or linguine with *clam sauce, you'll have to navigate a mouthwatering* minefield of Italian-accented appetizers and snacks including risotto balls, salumi, and expertly pressed sandwiches. • 47 E. 19th St. (212-780-0880). (M)

Madison Bistro
What every neighborhood needs: a casual spot for French classics like escargots, steak-frites, and bouillabaisse. *Open-faced sandwiches called tartines are* available at the bar, as are rustic French wines poured from imported oak barrels. • 238 Madison Ave., nr. 37th St. (212-447-1919). (M)

Nong
Seemingly overnight, the Asian-influenced Aleutia morphed into the all-Asian (mostly Thai and Japanese) Nong, and a chef who used to work at Ruby Foo's came in to consult on the spicy new menu. Choose from wok plates (chicken fried rice), large plates (crispy whole fish), and bento-box lunches full of rolls, dumplings, and stir-fries. •220 Park Ave. So., at 18th St. (212-529-3111). (M)

Rodeo Bar & Grill
This place bills itself as "the longest-running honky-tonk in New York," attracting bikers, families, and music-industry insiders. Urban cowboys can grab a drink at the horse trailer that's been converted into a bar, or tie on the feedbag with bison burgers, Santa Fe hand rolls, or the latest menu addition, Pearson's Texas barbecue, imported from Queens. • 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (212-683-6500). (I)

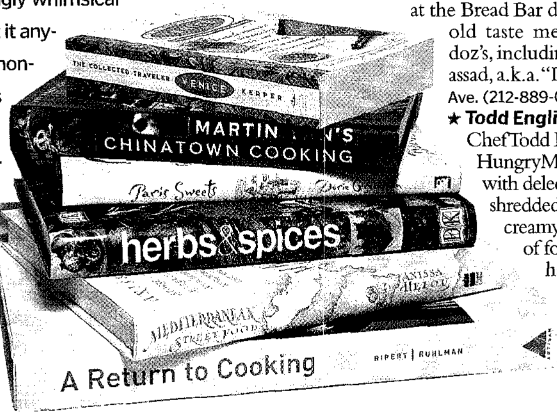
★ Tabla
It's diminishing to categorize Floyd Cardoz's clean Goan-spiced Maine crab cake or his exquisite pairing of seared foie gras with a black-pepper-and-pear compote as nouvelle Delhi; he's forged a deliriously satisfying union of this country's produce with the *strong, heady spices and bewitchingly pungent* condiments of his homeland. A less expensive menu at the Bread Bar downstairs aspires to rekindle old taste memories—specifically Cardoz's, including his mom's recipe for beef assad, a.k.a. "Indian pot roast." • 11 Madison Ave. (212-889-0667). (M–E)

★ *Todd English's Olives NY*
Chef Todd English has a genius for artful, HungryMan dishes. He stuffs his pastas with delectable fillings (sweet chestnuts, shredded veal) and slathers them with creamy cheeses. He molds cupolas of foie gras flan, builds pagodas of hanger steak, constructs pill boxes of tuna tartare with crunchy shrimps buried at the base. It's delicious but a little overwhelming, espe-

Ask Gael

Can one ever have too many cookbooks?

You've asked the wrong person. I get bruised bumping into the skyscraper pile overflowing my shelves, *and still I want more. I'll use* **Martin Yan's Chinatown Cooking** (William Morrow) *and* Anissa Helou's **Mediterranean Street Food** (HarperCollins) as gospel on my travels. I doubt I'll start baking again soon (it's underappreciated now that Manhattan's gone carbophobic). Still, Dorie Greenspan's charmingly illustrated **Paris Sweets** (Broadway Books) is a keeper, for the fantasy that I'll be so svelte next time I hit Paris that I can sample all the goodies in the pastry shops she stalked. I plan to fall asleep winter nights trying to absorb everything there is to know in Jill Norman's **Herbs & Spices** (DK) with its lush photographs. As for Eric Ripert and Michael Ruhlman's **A Return to Cooking** (Artisan), *Ripert's simple tomato-water consommé or the barely cooked salmon might nudge* me back to my rarely used kitchen, but the book—surprisingly whimsical and intimate—is too big and beautiful to cook beside (I want it anyway). I've already won cheers for chicken braised with figs, honey, and vinegar, as well as the bread salad in Judy Rodgers's down-to-earthly delicious **Zuni Cafe Cookbook** (W. W. Norton & Company), reviewed here in recent weeks—an energizer for cooks both active and lapsed. And I'm buying Barrie Kerper's anthology **Venice: The Collected Traveler** (Three Rivers Press) for all my Venice-smitten pals. And not just because it recycles my own musings.



VOLUME PURCHASING: Gael's cookbook picks for holiday giving.

PHOTOGRAPH BY AIMÉE HERRING.

cially if you tag on thrombotic desserts like the peppermint bombe (creamy chocolate with mint syrup inside). The cramped, frenetic space (in the Union Square W Hotel) makes lunchtimes a more restful experience. • 201 Park Ave. So. (212-353-8345). (E)

★ Union Pacific
A dramatic otherworldly rain-forest setting is a fitting stage for Rocco DiSpirito's wildly inventive, wonderfully weird cooking. Sweet, small scallops nuzzled in their shells by blobs of sea urchin with an essence of tomato, mustard oil, mirin, and black mustard. Halibut braised in goose fat with ginger jus and shallot cracklings. Mango and papaya carpaccio with pineapple sherbet and candied cilantro. In less capable hands, mad delusions; in DiSpirito's, pure genius. • 111 E. 22nd St. (212-995-8500). (E)

14th–42nd Streets, West Side

★ Above
Don't be discouraged by the proletarian to-'n'-fro of 42nd Street. A sophisticated and handsomely designed hideaway waits in the twenty-first-floor lobby of the Times Square Hilton, and so does Galveston lobster chili, a classic Caesar, and butter-poached Maine lobster. • 234 W. 42nd St. (212-642-2626). (E)

Arno
Garment District bigwigs and pre-Garden revelers flock to this lively, upscale northern Italian restaurant. Try reliable classics like veal scaloppine and red snapper sautéed with shrimp and clams, garlic, and white wine. • 141 W. 38th St. (212-944-7420). (M–E)

The Basil
From the owners of Holy Basil and Little Basil comes this elegant addition to the sprouting chainlet, where higher prices are justified with intricate presentations of such inventive East-West hybrids as a Waldorf-like pomelo salad with coconut-peanut dressing, and a porterhouse steak with sautéed morning glory and galangal-tamarind sauce. Equally impressive is the inspired selection of food-friendly wines at infinitesimal markups—just the thing to wean spicy-food fans off Singha. • 206 W. 23rd St. (212-242-1014). (M–E)

Bryant Park Grill
This straightforward American restaurant boasts the city's prettiest pocket park as its backdrop. During the summer, the outdoor café is as mobbed as Times Square. Claim a table indoors at the calmer Grill and try the Caesar salad, dry-aged New York strip steak, or maple-glazed Atlantic salmon. • 40th St., between Fifth and Sixth Aves. (212-840-6500). (M–E)

Le Madri
Pino Luongo's Chelsea mainstay has long enjoyed a reputation for rustic informality and flavorful Tuscan fare like sautéed chicken livers with pancetta and sage, buttermilk-and-Parmesan-marinated soft-shell crabs, and who can resist the wood-oven pizzas and fabulous focaccia robiola? The sidewalk café is a nice warm-weather spot for a light lunch of salad and pasta. • 168 W. 18th St. (212-727-8022). (M–E)

★ Lotus
Everything you wanted from a trendy club-bar-restaurant and less. Less attitude, less discomfort, less elbow contact, and less forgettable food. Lotus is a blooming surprise. A slight kitschiness keeps it warm. Nice-guy owners keep it friendly. And chef Richard Farnabe keeps you well-fed. Think of the velvet rope outside as a ribbon. And Lotus as a gift. • 409 W. 14th St. (212-243-4420). (M–E)

Man Ray
French record producer Thierry Klemeniuk recruited a team of noted lounge lizards for this assault on late-night, glamorama New York. He outfitted an old Chelsea firehouse with lots of retro-looking Pan-Asian knickknacks, and the food is better than it should be. Chef Benjamin De Forest's menu mixes unfussy French bistro standards like frisée aux lardons alongside some trendy dishes like seared fennel-pollen-crusted yellowfin tuna. • 147 W. 15th St. (212-929-5000). (M–E)

Nick & Stef's Steakhouse
Los Angeles chef Joachim Splichal opened the first branch of this steakhouse in his hometown, knowing it might play even better in red-meat-loving Manhattan. There's skillet cornbread, creamed spinach, and chocolate soufflé. And where's the beef? Front and center, hung out to dry in a steel-and-glass aging chamber. • 9 Penn Plaza (212-563-4444). (M–E)

Slate
Even if pool isn't your game, you might be willing to brave this hall's not exactly tony crowd, giant TVs, and techno throb—not to mention big guys wielding big sticks—for a crack at some delectable comfort food. The big cheese-and-mushroom-stuffed burger alone is worth crossing this cultural divide, and the chewy rare hanger steak is remarkable. • 54 W. 21st St. (212-989-0096). (M)

T.S. Ma
If you work at CNN, MSG, or the main post office branch, you've likely already eaten here. But if you're catching a train at Penn Station, or have tickets to the Garden, you should be aware that you're only minutes away from a plate of salt-and-pepper shrimp or General Tso's chicken. As has become increasingly prevalent in the Chinese-restaurant universe, there's also a sushi bar, plus a private dining area. • 360 W. 31st St. (212-971-0050). (M)

World Yacht Dining Cruises
Take an out-of-town visitor to see the sights—all of them—and sup on a selection from the "Best of New York" menu: featuring dishes based on recipes from the Sea Grill's Ed Brown, Olives's Todd English, and Park Avenue Cafe's David Burke, among others. Jacket required. • Pier 81, W. 41st St. at the Hudson River (212-630-8100). (E)

43rd–56th Streets, East Side

★ Brasserie
Nostalgists may have wished for a clone of the original Brasserie. But the redesign is stunning and the big-brother video screens make as much of your entrance as those bygone steps used to. The classic French food (onion soup, steak frites, mandatory beignets) is satisfying and served from breakfast through late night—a welcome anomaly in this early-to-bed precinct. • 100 E. 53rd St. (212-751-4840). (M–E)

Café Centro
A big, shiny brasserie-cum-café in the lobby of the MetLife Building; the joint is as fun and good as non-expensive midtown gets. In the loud little Beer Bar, get one of the best hamburgers in town. Closed Sunday. • 200 Park Ave., at 45th St. (212-818-1222). (M)

★ D'Artagnan, The Rotisserie
After years of selling foie gras and game to restaurants, D'Artagnan finally has its own: a high-ceilinged duplex countrified with tiled floors, rough ocher walls, and a cozy bar. Besides signature terrines and charcuterie, there's seriously rib-sticking Gascon fare like cassoulet, terrific spit-roasted chicken, lamb, and "la garbure et son chabrot," a duck-confit soup dense enough to be eaten with a fork. Finish your meal like a true Gascon with a shot of Armagnac blanc from a baseless glass. • 152 E. 46th St. (212-687-0300). (M–E)

Giambelli 50th Ristorante
Upscale Italian fare served in a warm and cozy atmosphere. The chef imports esoteric varieties of pasta from Italy to prepare his specialties; the fish and meat dishes are as careful. • 46 E. 50th St. (212-688-2760). (M)

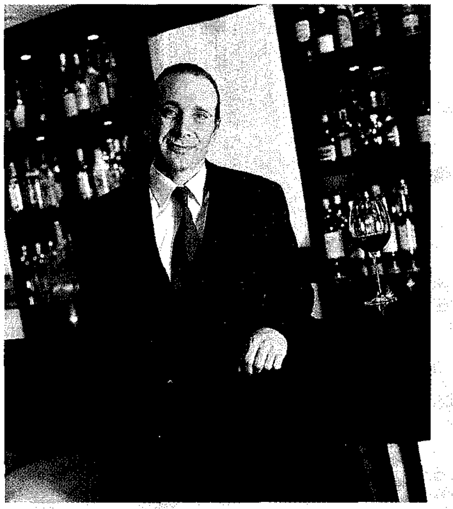
Haru
Haru means "spring" in Japanese, and the design theme at this fourth and funkiest Manhattan branch of the Haru chainlet is man-made nature, from the digital-photomural-of-grass floor to the robotic fish in the aquariums over the bar. The menu features all the usual suspects, plus fusion fare like a strip steak with wasabi croquette, spicy shallots, and ginger sauce. • 280 Park Ave., nr. 48th St. (212-490-9680). (M)

★ Maloney & Porcelli
Maloney & Porcelli claims it isn't a steakhouse, but the tide of pinstripe and hunks of food suggest otherwise. The best meat dish, though, isn't steak but a mammoth "crackling" pork shank—which arrives with a steak knife thrust deep into it—and the service couldn't be nicer. • 37 E. 50th St. (212-750-2233). (E)

★ Michael Jordan's The Steak House N.Y.C.
If you're looking for him, he ain't there. But if you've come for great beef, that's another story. A better slab of New York strip sirloin would be hard to find, no matter which train you board downstairs. And you're surrounded by the spectacular restoration. It's almost as exciting as sitting courtside. • 23 Vanderbilt Ave., Grand Central Terminal (212-655-2300). (E)

Nino's Positano
Upscale Italian specializing in food from the south, Positano in particular. Pastas range from the simple (fusilli with tomato-basil sauce) to the more complex (Cognac-infused seafood risotto), and main courses traverse similar territory. • 890 Second Ave., nr. 47th St. (212-355-5540). (M)

★ Olica
Olica used to be L'Actuel, and the formerly modish space it occupies is now decorated with Le Cirque-style light fixtures shaped like flaming carrots. Luckily, the talented chef Jean-Yves Schillinger is still in the kitchen. He's continued offering some of the old L'Actuel favorites, like salmon tartare, and added a va-



GONE FISHING: Umberto Arpaia at Acqua Pazza.

Opening

Rock Fish

Umberto Arpaia's parents owned La Tavernetta in Woodmere, his sister Donatella runs the Neapolitan-flavored Bellini, and he occupies himself as executive chef and owner of Cellini nearby. So his impulse to open **Acqua Pazza** in the old Artusi space might be congenital. Why let a perfectly good location (in the AOL Time Warner Building at Rockefeller Center) go to waste, when he could turn it into a restaurant devoted to coastal Italian cuisine? Smartly refurbished with slate tiles, dark wood, and an espresso-and-milk color scheme, Acqua Pazza offers a small menu supplemented by market-dependent seafood specials. The name means "crazy water," and refers to the traditional southern-Italian practice of cooking a whole fish in seawater. Arpaia bakes his instead, sanely, in a broth of cherry tomatoes, chili flakes, and white wine. (36 West 52nd Street; 212-582-6900.)

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRUCE KATZ.

Opening

Caribbean Vocation

Tired of shabby roti joints, Trinidadian expat Charmaine Gumbs left her career as a law-firm account supervisor to open **Sugarcane**, an upscale pan-Caribbean restaurant of her own. Besides arranging live entertainment like the calypso-jazz Sunday brunch, she and her partner Gaspa Rodriguez bring delicacies like steamed-codfish salad, rum-and-thyme-marinated stew chicken, and soursop flan to Park Slope. And rotis—Trinidad's most renowned culinary contribution and the best example of the island's considerable East Indian influence—finally get the stylish setting Gumbs always thought they deserved. (238 Flatbush Avenue, at Bergen Street, Brooklyn; 718-230-3954.)

NEW YORK ISLANDERS: Sugarcane's Charmaine Gumbs and Gaspa Rodriguez.

riety of racy newcomers like tuna tournedos flavored with sesame and mustard sauce, and a smooth asparagus soup ladled from a tureen over a single poached egg. • 145 E. 50th St. (212-583-0001). (M–E)

Smith & Wollensky
Urban cowboys herd together over big steaks with knives to match at impresario Alan Stillman's signature chophouse. The place has that landmark-steakhouse look—bare oak floors, a raffish air, and bustling waiters wearing service stars. There's surf and turf aplenty, improvisations at lunch, and an enviable wine cellar. • 797 Third Ave., at 49th St. (212-753-1530). (M–E)

Tropica
Always packed at lunch, but squeeze in at the bar and order the conch chowder and a glass of tropical iced tea. The dining room serves some of the most imaginative Caribbean-inspired seafood in town, but be sure to go on a weekday—the restaurant, located in the lobby of the MetLife Building, is closed Saturday and Sunday. • 200 Park Ave., nr. 45th St. (212-867-6767). (M–E)

43rd–56th Streets, West Side

★ Beacon
The gimmick here is cooking over an open fire: wood-roasted trout, spit-roasted duck with grilled scallions, roast suckling pig with grilled apples and bitter chocolate rub, even oysters. The house-baked breads are exceptional. And in an age of designer martinis and so-so cosmos, the classic-cocktail list is precision science. • 25 W. 56th St. (212-332-0500). (E)

Ben Benson's Steak House
This rollicking steakhouse has long fed hordes of hungry, beef-eating businessmen and the people who love them. At a time when steakhouses were famous for rudeness and hauteur, Benson's made a point of homeyness. The festive air gets pretty thick by the bar, where cigars prevail, but there's a weatherproofed "front porch" and a dining room devoted entirely to the assiduous consumption of prime aged beef. • 123 W. 52nd St. (212-581-8888). (E)

Benihana
Long before *Iron Chef* taught us just how quick-handed knife-wielding Japanese cooks can be, there were the tableside cooking shows that are still the main draw at this teppanyaki steakhouse. Kids, of course, love it. • 47 W. 56th St. (212-581-0930). (E)

Bombay Palace
This newly refurbished, elegant Indian restaurant has been serving its refined tandoori prawns, lamb kandhari, and chicken kashmiri in midtown for years. Try the excellent breads. • 30 W. 52nd St. (212-541-7777). (M)

Cascina
The communal farmhouse tables and equally rustic house wines, imported from the owner's Northern Italian vineyard, conspire to make this trattoria feel more Tuscan countryside than Hell's Kitchen storefront. Beyond lasagne and minestrone, the menu surprises with dishes like rabbit casserole in a bread crust, barbecued veal ribs, and whole-wheat pizza with smoked salmon and cream cheese. • 647 Ninth Ave., nr. 45th St. (212-245-4422). (M)

Cité
Ambassador of beef Alan Stillman cops a French accent at this soaring midtown steakhouse known for its wine dinners. Meat is just the hard core of the menu, a document that also includes pan-seared crab cake and roasted salmon, and desserts big enough for two or more to share. For more casual dining, try the Cité Grill next door. • 120 W. 51st St. (212-956-7100). (M–E)

Coco Pazzo Teatro
Tucked away inside the Time Hotel, this popular theater-district hangout is equally suited for a drink before the curtain or a leisurely meal after the show. The casually elegant dining room is a comfortable, informal spot for hearty dishes like mussels steamed with tomato, basil, and white wine; and grilled ribeye smothered with onions, peppers, and mushrooms. • 224 W. 49th St. (212-320-2929). (M–E)

Da Rosina
Those with curtains to make and bellies to fill find just what they're looking for in this Restaurant Row standby, a reliable source for homemade pasta, chicken and veal cutlets every which way, and Italian classics from fried clams to tirami su. A $22 prix fixe dinner and $13.95 lunch make it easy to splurge on affordable indulgences like spicy lobster frutti di mare and broiled sirloin steak. • 342 W. 46th St. (212-977-7373). (M)

★ Del Frisco's
Want to see what mahogany fashioned by testosterone looks like? This is without question the most urbane steakhouse you will ever see, its meat locker filled with terrific beef. From the usually overrated filet mignon, whose buttery blandness gets surmounted by a brash pepper-splattered crust, to the superb 26-ounce "double eagle" strip, Del Frisco's is a silverware-clanking crowd pleaser. • 1221 Sixth Ave., at 49th St. (212-575-5129). (E)

★ Estiatorio Milos
Eating in this lofty Greek seafood restaurant isn't exactly fishing for supper, but it's close. Beautiful whole fish from around the world are arranged over ice in the back of the austere, dramatically lit room, where preoccupied waiters invite customers to claim their entrée before it's reeled in to the kitchen to be simply grilled with lemon, olive oil, and herbs. The menu lists prices by the pound—$25 for the Florida pompano, $32 for the Mediterranean loup de mer—so unless you've worked at a carnival guessing weights, the bill is always something of a surprise. • 125 West 55th Street (212-245-7400). (E)

Film Center Cafe
To go with the vintage film memorabilia at this casual Hell's Kitchen comfort-food zone, there's a long list of wraps and overstuffed sandwiches, roast turkey, meatloaf, a raw bar, and a lively late-night bar scene. • 635 Ninth Ave., nr. 44th St. (I–M)

Haru
This branch of the stylish, popular Japanese mini-chain, like the others, specializes in fresh, oversize sushi, fifteen house sauces, plus fusion fare like a strip steak with wasabi croquette, spicy shallots, and ginger sauce. Natural wood tones and a wall of tree branches separating the dining room from the sushi bar brings a little serenity to Times Square. • 205 W. 43rd St. (212-398-9810). (M)

Martini's
Convenient for pre- and post-theater dining, with a buzzing sidewalk café and rustic homemade pastas, charcoal-grilled seafood, and, of course, multiple variations of the house drink. • 810 Seventh Ave., at 53rd St. (212-767-1717). (M)

Rock Center Café
Daily specials keep this contemporary rinkside dining room's American menu interesting, as does the strong Italian accent. Seafood risotto, fried calamari, and a burger with taleggio cheese keep diners focused on their plates rather than on the interpretive freestyle routines being perfomed on the ice. • 20 W. 50th St. (212-332-7620). (M)

★ The Sea Grill
Chef Ed Brown cooks fish so fresh at this Rockefeller Center seafood shrine that the menu notes the name of the boat that caught them; "à la plancha" means they're seared on a special grill that is supposed to excel at retaining moisture and flavor. Kitchen equipment aside, the results are indisputably delectable, as are appetizers like mussels in a Thai red-curry broth. • 19 W. 49th St. (212-332-7610). (E)

Seppi's
Like Raoul's, its atmospheric downtown progenitor, Seppi's has a tin ceiling, a roving fortune-teller, and an unusual-for-midtown closing time of 2 A.M. The bistro menu—a winning composite of French and Italian—lists tuna niçoise and tartes flambées alongside prawn risotto. • 123 W. 56th St. (212-708-7444). (M–E)

St. Andrews
In what might be New York's only full-fledged Scottish restaurant, the bartenders wear kilts, the scotch is single-malt, and the décor revolves around pictures of famous golf courses. The hearty steak-and-seafood menu features rack of lamb and brook trout stuffed with crabmeat and Irish oatmeal in a scotch-whiskey sauce. • 120 W. 44th St. (212-840-8413). (I–M)

★ Town
A delightful sensation takes over the moment you descend into Town—that all too infrequent feeling when you know you're going to be glad you came. From a front desk actually focused on you to a room aglow in plush, sleek romanticism, Town revels in being all grown up. But the real forte is chef-owner Geoffrey Zakarian, who prepares subtle, sophisticated dishes like tuna in ramp-and-sea-urchin sauce, and duck steak with buckwheat pilaf. • 15 W. 56th St. (212-582-4445). (M–E)

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRUCE KATZ.

Trattoria Dopo Teatro
Famous for its signature open ravioli of lobster and lamb, the menu also offers an across-the-board selection of regional Italian specialties. The dining room is decorated with Italian cinema stills and single-minded connoisseurs, and private parties can pursue their passions in the wine room, the grappa room, or the cigar lounge. • 125 W. 44th St. (212-869-2849). (M)

Tuscan Square
Pino Luongo's most ambitious project yet, this Rockefeller Center paean to all things Tuscan combines a rustic dining room with a downstairs marketplace complex of salad, sandwich, and pasta stations, plus a bakery and espresso bar. Chef Steven Petrecca's Tuscan menu offers such enticing entrées as fettuccine with veal-and-sage ragu and a ribeye steak with sautéed broccoli rabe. • 16 W. 51st St. (212-977-7777). (M–E)

Utsav Festive India
The $13.95 all-you-can-eat lunch buffet may be pricier than some, but the setting—an elevated bridge between two midtown office buildings—is posher, with tablecloths and flowers and gracious waiters wearing chili-pepper-patterned neckties. Every day brings a selection of four vegetable and three meat dishes, plus salads, chutneys and pickles, nan, superb saffron-speckled rice, and silky-sweet Indian puddings for dessert. • 1185 Sixth Ave., nr. 46th St. (212-575-2525). (M)

Vago
This Northern Italian midtowner makes its own pasta and breads along with house specialties like warm sea-bass carpaccio and venison medallions sautéed with Barolo and chestnuts. The wine list is extensive, and the dining room is adorned with frescoes, alabaster sconces, and cherrywood trim. • 29 W. 56th St. (212-765-5155). (M–E)

Zanzibar
The crowd at this loungey Hell's Kitchen restaurant is as eclectic as the menu. African, Arabic, and Mediterranean touches appear in dishes like fresh tuna tabbouleh, homemade Moroccan sausages with roasted pimientos, and semolina-dusted halibut with charmoula. The menu is arranged by portion size ("tiny," "small," and "sharing"), so be prepared to pass your plate. • 645 Ninth Ave, nr. 45th St. (212-957-9197). (M)

57th–60th Streets

★ Atelier
An intriguing diver-scallop-and-bluefin tartare and sensational roasted lobster with artichoke and rhubarb (on the sane $68 prix fixe) show that Gabriel Kreuther (Jean Georges's former chef de cuisine) aspires to the elite of our town's season-driven chefs. His morel soup with favas, peas, and mint oil is spring in a bowl. And tapioca balls in pineapple cream—the daring dessert-before-dessert—almost upstage the grapefruit tart and the rhubarb-strawberry soup with goat-milk sorbet that follow. • 50 Central Park So. (212-521-6125). (E)

★ Brasserie 8 1/2
At this souped-up designer bookend to the newly modish Brasserie, you get big brasserie dishes plus a *pumpkin-carpeted-diva staircase entrance, and two* subterranean, airport-lounge-style bars. The simpler menu choices tend to be better, like the frisée salad, the burger, and the cornflake-crusted crab cakes. • 9 W. 57th St. (212-829-0812). (M–E)

★ Felidia
In between writing cookbooks and taping segments of her TV show, Lidia Bastianich, the matriarch of the clan responsible in part for Lupa, Esca, and Becco, oversees this elegant bastion of Italian cooking. But chef Fortunato Nicotra deserves credit: Sauces are lighter, pastas still wonderful, and entrées get deftly tweaked. The wine list always impresses, and olive oil connoisseurs can spring for a $7 tasting. • 243 E. 58th St. (212-758-1479). (E)

Jimmy's Downtown
We're betting that the low, lean, and sexy intimacy of Jimmy Rodriguez's sequel to Jimmy's Uptown and Jimmy's Bronx Café will lure grown-ups on the prowl to this unlikely eastern shoal of 57th Street. Slither through the all-white, candlelit lounge and settle into a booth out back where servers lyricize over yuca-crusted scallops, a huge juicy pork chop, and luscious grilled sturgeon on creamy avocado mash. And don't leave without indulging in lush coconut flan. • 400 E. 57th St. (212-486-6400). (E)

The Manhattan Ocean Club
Savor your seafood in an elegant dining room decorated with Picasso ceramics. A pictorial menu features a dozen or so smiley-faced fish. Preparations range from classic (Dover sole meunière) to creative (grouper with roasted pineapple and black peppercorns). Or have the chef prepare your fish any way you like. • 57 W. 58th St. (212-371-7777). (E)

★ March
Expanded seating and a rooftop terrace aren't the only welcome additions to this ultraromantic Sutton Place townhouse. Wayne Nish has shed his obsession with Japan and embraced what he calls "New York cuisine," luxed up with a little more cream and butter. A typical tasting menu begins in a truffly, buttery haze of vegetable fricassee, then segues into Muscat-scented lobster and moist chicken in spice-mulled pear cider, before climaxing in rustic lamb shoulder with fennel purée. • 405 E. 58th St. (212-754-6272). (E)

ONEc.p.s.
Alan Stillman, along with executive chef David Burke and designer Adam Tihany, has rewired the Plaza's Edwardian Room. Tihany has colored the oaken walls caramel and put huge scarlet lampshades on the chandeliers, and the irrepressible Burke has concocted a whimsical menu that includes a foie gras–spiked burger and a rack of lamb accompanied by shepherd's pie. The mosaic floors and ceiling remain untouched, and the view of Central Park is as grand as ever. • 1 Central Pk. So. (212-583-1111). (E)

★ Shelly's New York
The latest Shelly Fireman production inhabits an old Automat space, ergo the "Horn & Hardart" creamed spinach and macaroni and cheese. Only the assimilative Fireman (of Brooklyn Diner fame) would offer towering shellfish platters and stone crabs flown in daily from Joe's in Miami Beach alongside miso-glazed halibut, chicken schnitzel, and a 50-ounce porterhouse steak cooked "Brooklyn style" and make it all work. • 104 W. 57th St. (212-245-2422). (M–E)

Above 60th Street, East Side

The Boathouse in Central Park
Claim a table by a flowery umbrella on the pondside deck and give thanks to Frederick Olmsted and generations of park champions for preserving this precious greenery. The American menu leans toward fresh seafood like pan-roasted monkfish with spring onions and garlic confit, and seared wild striped bass. • E. 72nd St. and Park Dr. N. (212-517-2233). (M–E)

★ Café Sabarsky
Museum Mile is full of museum cafés, but none quite like this elegant evocation of a Viennese-style kaffeehaus at Ronald Lauder's Neue Galerie New York. The artistic sensibility permeates the café, with its reproductions of Josef Hoffmann sconces, Adolf Loos bentwood chairs, and Otto Wagner fabrics. And the theme continues with tortes (Sacher and Linzer), Bavarian ham for breakfast, cod strudel for lunch—and Friday nights only, dinner service until 9 P.M. • 1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-288-0665). (M)

★ Centolire
The theme of Pino Luongo's latest is Italian-American/Tuscan. Everything on the menu is labeled either Old World (like timpano, à la *Big Night*) or New World (spaghetti with spicy lobster and oven-dried cherry tomatoes, a dazzlingly good dry-aged rib-eye steak). And anything with a little pot-shaped symbol next to it is slowly baked in terra-cotta, a technique that bridges both chronological and continental divides. • 1167 Madison Ave., near 86th St. (212-734-7711). (M–E)

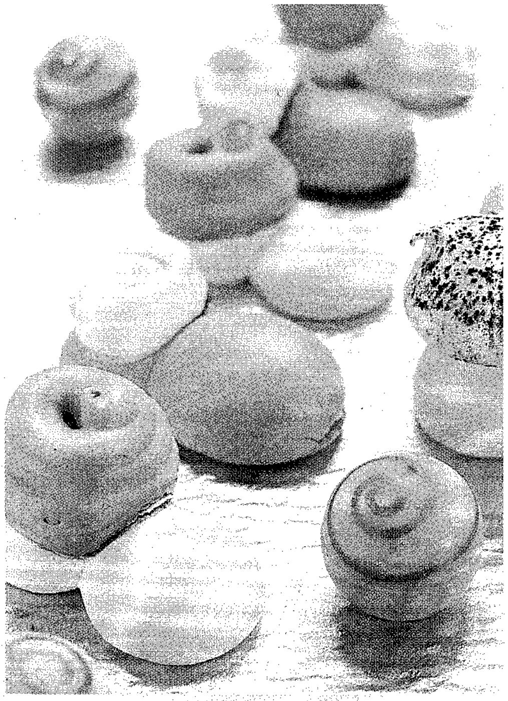
Coco Pazzo
Pino Luongo's Upper East Side temple of Tuscan is a neighborhood spot for a particularly demanding neighborhood. For everyone else, dishes like rigatoni with sweet and spicy sausage and peas in a tomato-cream sauce, and bistecca alla Fiorentina—not to mention an award-winning wine list—definitely merit a special trip. • 23 E. 74th St. (212-794-0205). (E)

★ Daniel
Daniel Boulud is blessed with the gift of being able to add familiar flavors into the most stunning of summations, like walnuts and foie gras that intensify the lush gaminess of quail. He routinely triumphs in why-didn't-anyone-else-think-of-it feats like sweetbreads without that heady aftertaste—suspending them between a rhubarb glaze and spinach purée. His chocolate bombe soars like no other. • 60 E. 65th St. (212-288-0033). (E)

Haru Sake Bar
Very fresh sushi, sashimi, tempura, plus Japanese fusion fare, and an expanded selection of sake and sake cocktails are the draw at this popular uptown branch of the Japanese mini-chain. Take-out service

Shopping

Icing on the Cake


MERINGUE IN THE NEW: Payard's cake decorations.

François Payard has created just the thing for pint-size pastry chefs this holiday season: With his cake-decorating kit for kids ($25), Easy-Bake Oven specialists can dress up dessert with tiny colored and frosted meringues shaped like Christmas trees and—somewhat inexplicably, unless you're French—"Santa Claus booties" and toadstools, plus chocolate-ganache-and-vanilla-filled chocolate balls. (Sorry, kids: "No liqueur," says the chef.) Leave a few of the meringues, which are also sold for $3.50 apiece at **Payard Patisserie & Bistro**, out by the hearth on Christmas Eve and you're sure to score bonus points with Santa. (1032 Lexington Avenue, near 73rd Street; 212-717-5252.)

PHOTOGRAPH BY CARINA SALVI.

Trend

Lovin' Spoonbread

It used to be that if you wanted to savor spoonbread, you had to head uptown to Harlem (Miss Mamie's Spoonbread Too and its spinoff, Miss Maude's, are sure bets) or down to Kentucky or Virginia, where they hold festivals complete with banjo-picking and spoonbread-eating contests the way we have street fairs. Well, maybe it's anti-Atkins backlash, but whatever the reason, chefs are gussying up the humble cornmeal side dish and serving it all over town: At **Guastavino's**, Daniel Orr seasons it with sage and goat cheese and serves it alongside his Thursday-night special, Texas beef brisket; downtown at **Kloe**, chef Erica Miller gives the dish a southwestern spin by using Taos blue cornmeal and pairing it with Norwegian salmon and chanterelles. You can even learn how to make it as part of a Kwanzaa cooking class given at the **New School's Culinary Arts Division** this December 20. The city's foremost spoonbread spooner, though, might be Scott Barton, the chef at the new West Village restaurant **Voyage**, whose version is more traditional (less stuffing-like, more soufflé-like) and whose spoonbread mantra is cornmeal: "That's the single most important factor, because it adds the right texture," he says. "I get mine fresh from the gristmill, from Arkansas or Tennessee, every two weeks." Served as an appetizer with a crayfish-and-rock-shrimp ragout, or just as a side with a touch of grana padano, his light and fluffy version tastes like a popover that's undergone a flavor transfusion and bought a pickup truck. R.P.

THE DISH RAN AWAY WITH THE . . . Spoonbread and brisket at Guastavino's.

too. • 1327 Third Ave., at 76th St. (212-452-1028). (M)

Mark's
Decked out like a private London club, with plump, tasseled pillows. Fine French-American cooking (roasted beet salad with goat cheese, thyme-crusted tuna with tomato and black-olive vinaigrette), award-winning wine list, and a Willy Wonka–worthy chocolate tea. • 25 E. 77th St., in the Mark Hotel (212-879-1864). (E)

Mo's Caribbean Bar and Mexican Grill
Pack your bags, sweetie; we're going to the islands. Close enough. This spot with an MTV-beach-party vibe serves Caribbean and Mexican-American fare like jerk chicken burritos, enchiladas, and fajitas—all in a dining room with real palm trees. Reserve for Monday's Lobster Madness night. Leave with a suntan. • 1454 Second Ave., at 76th St. (212-650-0561). (M)

Nino's
Elegant Italian with a romantic mural garden and nightly live entertainment. Try the grilled dishes—tuna on a bed of balsamic onions, double-cut veal chop—or the lobster fra diavolo. • 1354 First Ave., nr. 72nd St. (212-988-0002). (E)

★ Park Avenue Cafe
A polished, countrified American café for business lunches and get-to-know-yous in the evening. Chef David Burke makes the tired catchall "American fare" sing, and keeps the neighbors rapt with signature dishes like salmon pastrami with crushed pepper. • 100 E. 63rd St. (212-644-1900). (E)

★ The Post House
How grand can a steakhouse get? If you took a meat-and-potatoes guy who liked to hang out at the Art Student's League, gave him a few years at Princeton, and financed his *Wanderjahr* abroad, he might come home and open the Post House. It's clubby but not snooty, with a Christo here and a Twombly there, and a well-traveled menu that includes everything from a Cajun rib steak to venison osso buco. • 28 E. 63rd St., in the Lowell Hotel (212-935-2888). (E)

Rain East
Like its Upper West Side sibling, the spices at this East Side branch are slightly tamed for American consumption, more fragrant than fiery, but that doesn't detract from the appeal of dishes like Thai chicken-and-coconut soup, pad Thai, and curried beef. • 1059 Third Ave., near 62nd St. (212-223-3669). (M)

Rouge
Despite the demure Upper East Side–townhouse setting, Rouge is really a bargain bistro masquerading as a big-ticket restaurant. Nothing on David Ruggerio's menu breaks the $20 barrier, decorative dabs of sauce and baby boutique-greenery garnishes notwithstanding. The framework is French, with occasional forays into trendy Italian and Asian territory, like the spicy miso-marinated Chatham cod. The "chef's wine list" is a bonanza of equally affordable bottles at laughably low mark-ups. • 135 E. 62nd St. (212-207-4601). (M)

Sel & Poivre
Stanching the flow downtown for bistro fare. Regulars find what they are looking for in this quaint, countrified space. The country-French cuisine includes steak au poivre, bouillabaisse, and roasted chicken, and the prix fixe menus are a bargain. • 853 Lexington Ave., nr. 64th St. (212-517-5780). (M)

Toraya
A Japanese tea room in an elegant townhouse offering an enticing assortment of confections, green teas, and desserts. • 17 E. 71st St. (212-861-1700). (I)

Trata
With its fish-market display, its Greek spreads and salads, and its simply grilled seafood, this bustling Upper East Side restaurant offers an affordable, less dramatic alternative to Estiatorio Milos, its role model. • 1331 Second Ave., nr. 70th St. (212-535-3800). (M)

Above 60th Street, West Side

★ Cafe Luxembourg
Back when there really were very few good places to eat on the Upper West Side, there was Cafe Luxembourg. A well-edited (wild-mushroom ravioli with mascarpone, pan-roasted cumin-crusted duck) and reasonably priced menu, an unflappable staff, and seriously flattering lighting still make it a worthwhile detour from anywhere in town. • 200 West 70th St. (212-873-7411). (M)

★ Calle Ocho
Who'd a thunk it? That the West Side could ever boast a restaurant as uncalculatingly sexy as Calle Ocho, with its far wall's spectacular Caribbean sunset of glazed terracotta and its jewel-toned banquettes curving through the space like waves along the gulf? Let a staff so winning you at first suspect they're a few mojitos ahead of you steer you towards tangy lobster seviche, seafood paella, and terrific yuca fries. • 446 Columbus Ave., near 81st St. (212-873-5025). (M-E)

★ Compass
It didn't work as Marika, not even when talented Neil Annis took over. With a shift of partners, the newly dubbed Compass has finally found a winning West Side mojo. This time around Annis's tweaked menu (a clever chopped salad, luscious vichyssoise, shimmering halibut, a first-rate veal chop, short ribs on fingerling purée) should garner as much attention as the design. • 208 W. 70th St. (212-875-8600). (E)

Kitchenette Uptown
This much roomier spinoff of the venerable Tribeca comfort-food cottage and its expanded dinner menu might be reasons for the owners to reconsider the "ette" part of the name. But the food and the country-kitchen décor are as small-town quaint as ever. There are peach pancakes, salmon-croquette sandwiches, blue-plate specials, homemade pie, and, as the sign above the café-side counter says, breakfast, served all day. • 1272 Amsterdam Ave., near 123rd St. (212-531-7600). (I-M)

★ Ouest
After cultivating a coterie of foodie followers at places like Alison on Dominick and Cascabel, Tom Valenti brings his distinctive style of boldly layered flavors—and those lamb shanks—to a neighborhood legendarily short on sophisticated grub. Clearly, he's doing his darnedest to turn the tide with reprises of old favorites like potato, goat cheese, and truffle terrine with transcendent beets; and lusty short rib on an ooze of polenta perfumed with smoked onions. • 2315 Broadway, near 84th St. (212-580-8700). (M-E)

Restaurant 222
Still as cozy and romantic as ever, Restaurant 222 has changed direction: Owner Frank Valenza now calls it an "American-Italian" steakhouse. That means surprisingly flavorful fillet steaks accompanied by sauces like pizzaiola and nutted garlic and irresistible whipped potatoes. The prix fixe menus ($20 at lunch, $29.95 at dinner) are particularly good deals, especially compared with the pricy à la carte offerings. • 222 W. 79th St. (212-799-0400). (E) ($)

Sapphire Indian Cuisine
A couple of partners from Tribeca's Salaam Bombay have brought regional Indian cuisine to Columbus Circle. The prix fixe lunch buffet is a bargain, and all the trendy territories (Goa, Gujarat) are well-represented. • 1845 Broadway, nr. 61st St. (212-245-4444). (M)

Scaletta
A dining room decorated in muted blues and pinks is the tranquil setting for refined Northern Italian fare, from smoked salmon and beef carpaccio to a selection of risotto and veal dishes. Conveniently located across the street from those famous dinosaurs at the Museum of Natural History. • 50 W. 77th St. (212-769-9191). (M)

BY CARINA SALVI.

Classical & Dance

Edited by Alicia Zuckerman

Classical Music

St. Patrick's Cathedral Choir
Joined by the AmorArtis Chamber Choir, performs Handel's *Messiah*. 12/10 at 7:15. • St. Patrick's Cathedral, Fifth Ave. at 50th St. (212-753-2261); free (reserved seats: $20–$25).

★ **"Winterreise"**
Choreographer Trisha Brown stages Franz Schubert's epic song cycle, sung by baritone Simon Keenlyside. Through 12/13. See "Dance."

★ **"Water Passion After St. Matthew"**
Tan Dun conducts the New York premiere of his choral/instrumental work commemorating the 250th anniversary of Bach's death, with the Talujon Percussion Group and the Dessoff Choirs. 12/11, 12/13, and 12/14 at 7:30. • Brooklyn Academy of Music, Harvey Theater, 651 Fulton St. (718-636-4100); sold out, call for returned tickets.

North River Music
Presents excerpts from Eve Beglarian's *A Book of Days*, a 365-piece multimedia project. 12/12 at 8. • Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. (212-242-4770); $15.

Ensemble Sospeso
New-music group performs two concerts of works by British composer Brian Ferneyhough. 12/12 and 12/14 at 8:30. • 12/12: Tenri Cultural Institute, 43A W. 13th St. (212-663-1675); $15. 12/14: Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (212-247-7800); $20.

★ **New York Philharmonic**
Steven Isserlis makes his Phil debut in Tchaikovsky's Rococo Variations (see box). Also on the program, Nielsen's Symphony No. 4 and selections from Smetana's *Má Vlast*. 12/12 and 12/17 at 7:30, 12/13 at 11; 12/14 at 8. • Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (212-875-5656); $20–$88.

New York Philomusica
Performs works by the late Iain Hamilton and Gordon Getty, Jan Swafford, and Ravel. 12/12 at 8. • Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. (212-580-9933); $25.

★ **Orpheus Chamber Orchestra**
The world premiere of Osvaldo Golijov's *Three Songs for Soprano and Orchestra* features Dawn Upshaw. Also, Mozart's Symphony No. 39 and Fauré's *Suite: Masques et Bergamasques*. 12/12 at 8. • Carnegie Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (212-247-7800); $19–$93.

Stefan Wolpe Society
Unsung avant-garde composer's centennial celebration continues with *Music for Any Instruments* performed by the Cygnus Ensemble, 12/11 at 7:30; and "Music of Exile for Saxophone and Piano," a program of works by composers deemed "degenerate" by the Nazis. 12/12 at 7:30. • 12/11: Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. (212-868-1613); $15. 12/12: Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-9400); $15.

★ **Metropolitan Museum of Art Concerts**
Tallis Scholars give William Byrd's Mass in Four Voices its first U.S. performance, 12/12. Chanticleer's holiday repertoire spans five centuries, 12/15. My Lord Chamberlain's Consort plays music from the English Renaissance, 12/16. New York Big Brass takes on Monteverdi and Rimsky-Korsakov alike, 12/17. Concerts at 6:30 and 8:30. • Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-570-3949); $55.

Vivica Genaux
There's lots of buzz lately about this mezzo from Alaska. For her recital at Carnegie, she'll sing works from her latest CD, as well as Haydn, Rossini, and others. 12/13 at 8. • Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (212-247-7800); $32.

★ **National Chorale**
Annual performance of Handel's Messiah. 12/13 at 8. • Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (212-721-6500); $27–$88.

New York Choral Society
Christmas concert features appearances by Daniel Rodriguez (the NYPD's most famous tenor) and the Young People's Chorus of New York City. 12/13 at 8. • Carnegie Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (212-247-7800); $15–$75.

★ **Christopher O'Riley**
Concert pianist performs his solo arrangements of songs by the British rock group Radiohead. 12/13 at 8. • Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. (212-854-7799); $20.

"Downtown Messiah"
Updated take on Handel's perennial favorite calls on rock, jazz, bluegrass, blues, and gospel. 12/14 and 12/15 at 7:30 and 10:30; 12/17 at 6:30. • 12/14, 12/15: Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St. (212-228-6300); $25. 12/17: Winter Garden, World Financial Center, 220 Vesey St. (212-945-0505); free.

★ **Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center**
Annual presentation of Bach's complete Brandenburg Concerti, each with different players. 12/15 at 5 and 12/17 at 7:30. • Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center (212-875-5788); $27.50–$37.50.

Choirs of the Church of St. Luke in the Fields
Offer a nice alternative to the Messiah: Saint-Saëns's Christmas Oratorio. 12/15 at 4. • Church of St. Luke in the Fields, 487 Hudson St. (212-414-9419); $20.

★ **Steven Isserlis**
British cellist launches new chamber works collaboration between the Y and the New York Philharmonic with members of the Phil. (See box.) 12/15 at 3. • 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (212-415-5500); $40.

★ **Klezmer Conservatory Band**
Evokes a sweet, energetic blend of jazz, folk, and old-time Jewish classics. 12/15 at 3. • Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (212-721-6500); $28–$64.

★ **Vienna Choir Boys**
Masterwork repertoire such as Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, motets by Buxtehude and Mendelssohn, and former Vienna Choir Boy Franz Schubert's *Widerspruch* make up the annual Christmas concert. 12/15 at 7:30. • Carnegie Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (212-247-7800); $19–$75.

Waverly Consort
Presents *A Christmas Story*, a narrative program of Medieval vocal and instrumental music. 12/15 at 1 and 3. • The Cloisters Museum, Fort Tyron Park (212-650-2290); $45.

★ **Emanuel Ax**
Legendary pianist plays Beethoven, Chopin, and Bernstein. 12/16 at 7:30. • Carnegie Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (212-247-7800); $25–$89.

★ **Jaime Laredo and Pinchas Zukerman**
Two of chamber music's best perform works by Boccherini, Arensky, and Tchaikovsky. 12/17 and 12/18 at 8. • 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (212-415-5500); $35.

"Robert Sherman Birthday Bash"
Heavy-hitters Emanuel Ax, Peter Schickele, William Bolcom, Joseph Kalichstein, and others gather to celebrate the broadcaster and music writer's seventieth. 12/17 at 8. • Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. (212-501-3330); free.

Opera

Amato Opera
Rossini's *Barber of Seville* runs weekends through 1/5. 12/14 at 7:30; 12/15 at 2:30. • Amato Opera, 319 Bowery (212-228-8200); $28.

Dicapo Opera
Presents Puccini's rarely staged second opera, *Edgar*. 12/13 and 12/14 at 8; 12/15 at 4. • Dicapo Opera, 184 E. 76th St. (212-288-9438); $45.

Ground Rules This section emphasizes classical concerts, recitals, and outdoor performances (but only the premeditated ones), and includes the occasional jazz concert if it is held, say, in a public space. Stars (★) indicate our editors' recommendations. For rock concerts and club information, see "Nightlife."

Talent

He's an Original

BACK TO BASICS: Steven Isserlis seeks out long-lost original scores and music by forgotten composers.

As a child, **Steven Isserlis** would pore over his Grove music dictionary, searching for cello works beyond the usual Beethoven and Bach. "There's a lot of worthwhile music, ranging from pleasant to great, that people just don't play at all," he says. "And it's a shame." Isserlis's affinity for forgotten music and composers—"hobbyhorses," he calls them—coupled with his quests for original scores have led to his reputation as a purist. "I guess. It's only because I enjoy it, really," he says over cappuccino in a London bistro the morning after wowing a sold-out Wigmore Hall audience with a program of rarely heard chamber works. He's in New York for the week, making his Philharmonic debut playing Tchaikovsky's Variations on a Rococo Theme ("Of course, I do the *original*") and a Czech-Jewish-themed recital at the 92nd Street Y. His British accent, maverick's attitude, and mass of hair (not to mention lineage going back to Felix Mendelssohn, Karl Marx, and Helena Rubenstein) make him resemble the archetype of the classical-music character, a role he either ignores or enjoys tremendously. Sounding more than a bit like Wolfgang Amadeus in the movie, he says: "Why talk to a vicar when you can talk to God?" (See "Classical Music.") A.Z.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JANE SEBIRE.

★ Metropolitan Opera
Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* opens 12/13. William Bolcom's *A View From the Bridge*, R. Strauss's *Elektra*, and Verdi's *Il Trovatore* are also onstage. Call, or visit metopera.org. • Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center (212-362-6000); $25–$280.

Manhattan School of Music Opera Theater
Presents Thomas Pasatieri's *The Seagull*, based on Chekhov's play. 12/11 and 12/13 at 8; 12/15 at 2:30. • Manhattan School of Music, Broadway and 122nd St. (212-749-2802); $15–$20.

Dance

★ Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
Premieres Lynne Taylor-Corbett's *Prayers From the Edge*, based on sixties-era images from Africa and the Middle East, set to Peter Gabriel's *Passion*; also a transformed version of *Black Milk*, originally choreographed for the women of the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company, and *Apex*, a take on freedom set to techno and jazz. Through 1/5. Call for details. • City Center, W. 55th St. bet. Sixth and Seventh Aves. (212-581-1212); $25–$90.

Ballet Hispanico
Presents new works by Ann Reinking and Pedro Ruiz, including Reinking's *Slices*, a joyful, full-company dance set to music by Santana, and Ruiz's *Cecilia*, based on a tragic nineteenth-century Cuban love story. Through 12/15. Call for details. • Joyce Theater, Eighth Ave. at 19th St. (212-242-0800); $40.

★ Big Dance Theater
Director Paul Lazar, choreographer Annie-B Parson, and playwright Mac Wellman join forces for this modern take on *Antigone*. Through 12/22. Call for details. • Dance Theater Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. (212-924-0077); $32.

Eleventh Annual Improvisation Festival
Performances by Bebe Miller, Sara Rudner, John Jasperse, and others run through 12/15. Call for details. • Various Lower East Side venues (212-598-0551); free–$12.

★ New York City Ballet
George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker* runs through 1/5. Call for details or visit nycballet.com. • New York State Theater, Lincoln Center (212-870-5570); $18–$90.

★ Trisha Brown Dance Company
Performs the New York premiere of *Geometry of Quiet*, set to Salvatore Sciarrino, and revives the 1986 *Set and Reset* with score by Laurie Anderson; also, *El Trilogy*. Through 12/14. Call for program details. • John Jay College Theater, Lincoln Center (212-721-6500); $40.

★ Doug Varone
Presents *The Bottomland*, a full-evening multimedia work about the lives of people in backwoods Kentucky has its world premiere. Through 12/22. Call for details. • Ohio Theater, 66 Wooster St. (212-279-4200); $25–$32 (12/10: $150–$250).

★ "Winterreise"
Trisha Brown stages Franz Schubert's epic song cycle, sung by baritone Simon Keenlyside and danced by members of her company. Through 12/13. Call for details. • John Jay College Theater, Lincoln Center (212-721-6500); $40.

Dances Patrelle
Annual performance of *The Yorkville Nutcracker* sets the classic tale in New York City, amid Central Park, Gracie Mansion, and the Bronx Botanical Gardens. 12/13–12/15. Call for details. • Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College, 68th St. bet. Park and Lexington Aves. (212-772-4448); $40.

"The Christmas Revels"
Theatrical nod to the Irish immigrant experience features a cast of 80, performing Celtic dance, song, music, and poetry. 12/13–12/15. Call for details. • Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400); $27–$37.

International Ballet Theatre
Presents the full-length *The Nutcracker*, set to Tchaikovsky's score. 12/15 at 2. • Colden Center, Queens College (718-793-8080); $11.

Edited by Ethan Brown

Concerts

Martin Sexton
12/12 and 12/13 at 8. A Boston-born rocker who often earns comparison to Ryan Adams but whose songs are more in the traditon of the muscular soul of the Stax era. • The Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. (212-307-7171). $25, $30.

Small Stages

B.B. King Blues Club & Grill
12/13: Rebirth Brass Band. 12/14: Eddie From Ohio. 12/17: Molly Hatchet. • 243 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144).

★ Bottom Line
12/13 and 12/14: "The Downtown Messiah" with Marshall Crenshaw; David Johansen; Jane Siberry; Syd Straw; more. 12/15: Jane Siberry. • 15 W. 4th St. (212-228-6300).

★ Bowery Ballroom
12/11: Susan Tedeschi; the Navigators. 12/13: The Mooney Suzuki; the Witnesses. 12/14: The Rapture; LCD Soundsystem (see box). • 6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111).

Connolly's Pub and Restaurant
Saturdays at 10:30: Black 47. • 121 W. 45th St. (212-597-5126).

★ Irving Plaza
12/14: Marianne Faithfull. (See box.) • 17 Irving Pl. (212-777-6800).

Joe's Pub
Mondays: New-music showcase. Tuesdays: D.J.'s Beverly Bond and Belinda spin hip-hop and R&B. Wednesdays: World music. Thursdays: Editors, writers, photographers, and all sorts of other non-D.J.'s take to the decks for the "Personality D.J. Series." Saturdays: D.J. Johnny spins hip-hop, house, and soul classics. • 425 Lafayette St. (212-239-6200).

Knitting Factory
12/10: M.C. Paul Barman; Whirlwind Heat; more. 12/12 and 12/13: Kelly Joe Phelps; Willy Porter. 12/14: Mary Lou Lord. 12/17: Marco Benevento. • 74 Leonard St. (212-219-3055). $.

Makor
12/12: Patti Rothberg. 12/15: Gaelic Storm and Full Frontal Folk. 12/16: "Broadway Rocks" featuring Anthony Rapp. • 35 W. 67th St. (212-601-1000).

Maxwell's
12/11: Cementhead. 12/12: "International Pop Overthrow Festival" presents: Cosmic Avenger; Trolleyvox; Nixon's Head; more. 12/14: Matt White's New Blood Revival. 12/15: M.C. Paul Barman; Whirlwind Heat. • 1039 Washington St., Hoboken, N.J. (201-653-1703).

Mercury Lounge
12/11: VHS or Beta; Scissor Sisters; Phaser. 12/12: Circle and Square; the Sheila Divine. 12/13: Slobberbone; Will Johnson. 12/14: Chauncey; Tammany Hall. 12/15: The So and So's. 12/16: The Forty Fives; the D4. • 217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700).

★ Northsix
12/13 and 12/14: Mudhoney; Oneida. 12/15: "History of a Girl" featuring Janeane Garofalo. 12/16: "Eating Out" with Todd Barry; Jonathan Corbett; more. 12/17: Garrett Devoe; Rye Coalition. 12/18: Scout. • 66 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-5103).

S.O.B.'s
12/13: "Soulcity" presents Amy Douglas and the Industry Standard. 12/14: Late Night Batucada. 12/16: Grupo Caribe. 12/18: Common. • 204 Varick St. (212-243-4940).

Southpaw
12/12: The Prodigals. 12/13: Los Straitjackets Christmas Pageant. 12/14: French Kicks. • 125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0236).

The Village Underground
12/13: Liquid Soul; Jerome Jordan. • 130 W. 3rd St. (212-777-7745).

Clubs

APT
Mondays: "The Minty Fresh Living Room" with Bobbito Garcia. Tuesdays: "iPod Party" with AndrewAndrew. Wednesdays: "Little Ricky's Rib Shack" with Rich Medina. Fridays: "Undressed" with Ursula 1000. Saturdays: Chairman Mao and Citizen Kane. • 419 W. 13th St. (212-414-4245).

Arc
Fridays: "Be Yourself" with progressive-house maestro D.J. Danny Tenaglia. Saturdays: "Made Saturdays," trance and progressive house spun by the likes of Deep Dish. • 6 Hubert St. (212-226-9212).

Centro-Fly
Thursdays: Eclectic music with "?"; Fridays: "GBH" hosts

Performance

Acid Queen

The current assortment of female singer-songwriters ranges from unbearably whimsical (Michelle Branch) to impishly cute (Avril Lavigne). Thankfully, **Marianne Faithfull** is still around to offer nasty takes on love and romance (like "Sex With Strangers," from her surprisingly great recent album, *Kissin Time*), which those teen pop stars wouldn't dare touch. On December 14, the acerbic songstress comes to Irving Plaza on the (spike) heels of a series of well-received New York performances. (See "Small Stages.")

AN INDEPENDENT WOMAN: Marianne Faithfull.

PHOTOGRAPH BY RANKIN/CAMERAPRESS/RETNA, LTD.

Performance

Edge Auteur

SICK OF MYSELF: LCD Soundsystem's James Murphy.

Like Beck's "Loser" or Skee-Lo's "I Wish," LCD Soundsystem's "Losing My Edge" turns bitter, self-critical reflections into completely compelling pop. "It's a song about failure," says LCD Soundsystem's James Murphy, "or, more specifically, about me failing." When he recorded the song last year, Murphy had already scored some success as an engineer on adventurous albums like David Holmes's *Bow Down to the Exit Sign*, but he was less known as an artist, playing in underground punk bands with names like Speedking and Pony. "I didn't think I had anything left to say," Murphy says. "I decided I wasn't fit to make music." So Murphy entered DFA, the downtown recording studio (the name's an acronym for "Death From Above") that he shares with partner Tim Goldsworthy, to reflect on his creative impasse. "I didn't have any lyrics," Murphy explains, "I just wanted to bitch about people I was losing my edge to." "Losing My Edge" could have been a grating lament, but Murphy turned the song into a biting, hilarious statement on omnipotent hipsterism everywhere (the outsize claims to cool catalogued in the song include giving musical advice to Captain Beefheart and witnessing the birth of ecstasy culture in Ibiza in 1988). Since its release this summer, it's earned comparisons to the Talking Heads' "Once in a Lifetime," and major labels are now knocking on the door of both Murphy and DFA label mates the Rapture, with whom LCD Soundsystem shares a bill at the Bowery Ballroom on December 14. "This song that I created to snuff myself out has brought me back to life," Murphy says. "It's so ironic that it's almost Greek tragedy." (See "Small Stages.") E.B.

some of the more adventurous nights at the club with D.J.'s like Ashley Beedle and Marshall Jefferson. 12/14: Felix Da Housecat. • 45 W. 21st St. (212-627-7770).

Club Shelter
Saturdays: Timmy Regisford's long-running deep-house party "Shelter." • Club Shelter, 20 W. 39th St. (212-439-4141).

Luxx
Fridays: "Mutants" with D.J. Larry Tee. Saturdays: Tee spins electroclash at "Berliniamsburg." Sundays: "House Music Sessions" with D.J. Raji K and D.J. Gomi. Mondays: "Cult Movie Mondays." Tuesdays: D.J. Miss Guy spins rock and metal at "Hell Bent for Brooklyn." • 256 Grand Street, Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-1000).

The Roxy
Saturdays: The Chelsea boys dance all night to a rotating set of house D.J.'s, including Razor, of Razor and Guido. • 515 W. 18th St. (212-627-0404). $.

SPA
Wednesdays: Rock and roll and electro spun by D.J.'s like Paul Sevigny. Thursdays: A-listers and fashionistas take over with "Ultra" featuring hip-hop, house, and rock and roll spun by D.J.'s Mark Ronson, Lady Bunny, Cameron Douglas. Saturdays: Overdressed Euros line up for "Jet Set" with D.J. Eric LaPeau. • 76 E. 13th St. (212-388-1060).

Comedy

Comedy Cellar
Through 12/15: Colin Quinn; Kevin Brennan; Robert Kelly; Godfrey; Greg Giraldo. • 117 MacDougal St. (212-254-3480).

Dangerfield's
Through 12/15: Carrie Karavas; Billy Burr; Richie Byrne; Hood; Steve Byrne. • 1118 First Ave., nr. 61st St. (212-593-1650).

Surf Reality
First Friday of every month: "The Vim Variety Show." First Saturday of every month: "The Carmen Mofongo Show." • 172 Allen St. (212-673-4182).

Cabaret

★ Cafe Carlyle
Mondays through 12/30: Eddy Davis New Orleans Jazz Band featuring Woody Allen. Tuesdays through Saturdays through 12/31: Bobby Short. • Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600).

Danny's Skylight Room
Saturdays in December: Blossom Dearie. • 346 W. 46th St. (212-265-8130).

Don't Tell Mama
Thursdays in December at 6: "Seth's Broadway Chatterbox." Saturdays at 8:30: Ron Poole's "Poole Party!" Saturdays at 11: Tommy Femia and Christine Pedi in "Judy Garland and Liza Minnelli Live!" • 343 W. 46th St. (212-757-0788). $.

★ Feinstein's at the Regency
Through 12/28: Michael Feinstein. $30 food-and-beverage minimum for all shows. • 540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-307-4100 or 212-339-4095).

FireBird Café
Through 12/28: Chris Barrett performs Wednesdays through Saturdays. • 365 W. 46th St. (212-586-0244). $15 food and drink minimum.

Judy's
12/11: Antoinette Silicato in "Singing to Life." 12/12: David Sabella. 12/13: Julie Reyburn in "Blackbird." 12/14: Judy Kreston and David Lahm in "A Brand New Us." 12/15: Susan Baum and Ray Hoffman in "She's a Little Bit Cabaret . . . He's a Little Bit Jazz." 12/16: David Sabella. 12/17: Craig Zurlini in "Goodfella." • 169 Eighth Ave., nr. 18th St. (212-929-5410).

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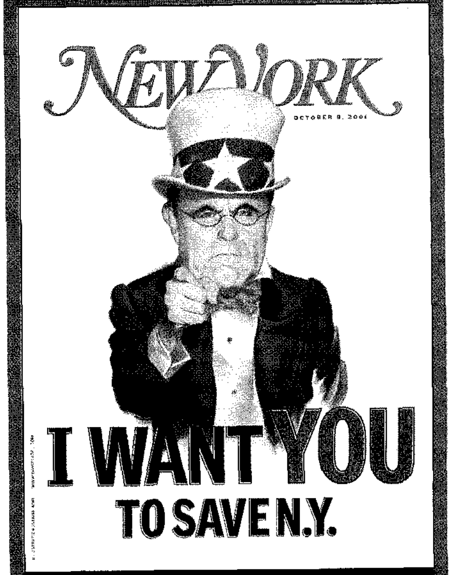

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cue

TheMix

Edited by Boris Kachka

Radio Highlights

Handel's Messiah at Trinity Church
The holiday tradition at Trinity, which has been hosting the oratorio since 1770, continues with the classical station's broadcasting the performance and host Jeff Spurgeon's giving an intermission update on the area's recovery since 9/11. • 12/15 at 3 P.M. WQXR, 96.3 FM.

Behind Baz Luhrmann's "La "Bohème"
Based on six months of backstage access to the innovative director's new Broadway opera, a one-hour documentary includes music, vignettes, and interviews with the principals. • 12/15 at 4 and 10 P.M. WNYC, 93.9 FM.

Carol Channing
The celebrated actress talks to the eponymous host of "The Lewis Burke Frumkes Show" about her memoir, *Just Lucky I Guess*. • 12/15 at 8 P.M. WPAT, 930 AM.

Lectures and Panels

Tan Dun
The award-winning composer behind the score to *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* discusses his work *Water Passion After St. Matthew* the night it debuts at the Next Wave Festival. • 12/11 at 6 P.M. BAM Rose Cinemas, Theater 2, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4111); free.

Abraham Summit
Bruce Feiler, author of *Abraham: A Journey to the Heart of Three Faiths*, moderates a panel of three clerics representing the monotheistic religions. • 12/11 at 7:30 P.M. 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (212-415-5500); $18.

"The Red Hot Mamas"
Following a light lunch, critic Edith Sobel talks about bygone Jewish women artists like Sophie Tucker, Fanny Brice, and Edna Farber. • 12/12, lunch at 12:30 P.M., talk 1:30 P.M. 820 Second Ave., near 43rd St. (212-687-5030); $20.

Joshua Fried
The postmodern percussionist and composer (in the mold of John Cage) discusses his electronic experiments, demonstrating with musical samples. • 12/12 at 3 P.M. New School University, 66 W. 12th St. (212-229-5488); $5.

Martha Graham's "Clytemnestra"
In the first of a three-part series of panels called "Martha Graham: Steps of a Giant," Composer Halim El-Dabh is joined by two dancers and two moderators in a discussion of the work. • 12/12 at 5 P.M. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, 111 Amsterdam Ave., at 65th St. (212-642-0142); free.

Carroll Dunham and Mark Epstein
Dunham, the genre-bending artist with a survey at the museum, talks to writer and psychiatrist Mark Epstein as part of an interview series sponsored by the magazine *Bomb*. • 12/12 at 7 P.M. New Museum of Contemporary Art, 583 Broadway (212-219-1222); free with $3 admission.

"Birth of a Neighborhood: Battery Park City"
Architects, urban planners, and Battery officials discuss the creation and evolution of the riverside development; perhaps they'll explain its resemblance to San Diego. • 12/12 at 7 P.M. Museum of Jewish Heritage, 18 First Pl., Battery Park City (212-945-0039); $7.

Michael Novacek
The Museum of Natural History's curator of paleontology talks about his adventures in the field and his recent book, *Time Traveler: In Search of Dinosaurs and Ancient Mammals From Montana to Mongolia*. • 12/12 at 8:15 P.M. 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (212-415-5500); $22.

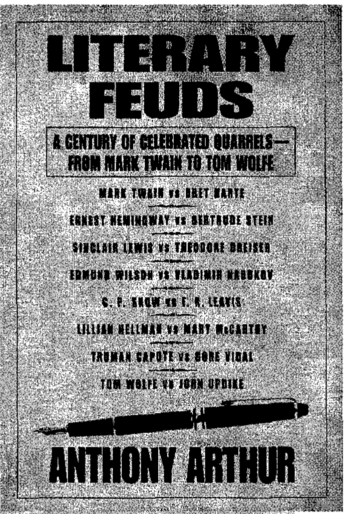
David Rees
The cartoonist, whose running online comic on our inane foreign policy, "Get Your War On," has become a hit and a new book, talks about his strip and shows slides at the Williamsburg haunt. • 12/13 at 7 P.M. Pete's Candy Store, 709 Lorimer St., Brooklyn (718-302-3770); free.

"Baseball Is New York"
Peter Laskowich charts the history of the game invented in 1840s Madison Square Park, popularized in Brooklyn, and later dominated by the (now dormant) Bronx Bombers. • 12/15 at 1 P.M. Martin Luther King Jr. High School, 122 Amsterdam Ave., at 65th St. (212-273-5304); $3.

In Print

Why I Fight

Seventy years before Fox's *Celebrity Boxing*, Theodore Dreiser and Sinclair Lewis were asked to go fifteen rounds at Ebbets Field. They declined. At least they managed to be remembered mostly for their work; Lillian Hellman and Mary McCarthy—their feud lately reimagined on Broadway by Nora Ephron—haven't been so lucky. The majority of the sixteen authors whose (mostly verbal) fisticuffs are recounted in Anthony Arthur's **Literary Feuds** (St. Martin's; $23.95) just couldn't help themselves. "I was just intrigued by the fact that these enormously gifted people would spend so much time on relatively futile pursuits," says Arthur, a literature professor who's switched from writing military histories to depicting more urbane conflicts. Focusing on Americans, Arthur starts with two soured mentor-student relationships—washed-up Bret Harte vs. a surprisingly vindictive Mark Twain, and biting Gertrude Stein against the pugnacious Hemingway. "People resent having to acknowledge that they've been helped," Arthur explains. Later in the century, radio and television made it easier for writers to savage each other more completely (it was on Dick Cavett's show that McCarthy claimed every word Hellman wrote was a lie, including *and* and *the*). "The later you get, the more these writers seem to become kind of performing personalities," says Arthur. (Witness Capote vs. Vidal, and Wolfe vs. Updike et al.) But why no chapter for the most indiscriminate pugilist of them all? Norman Mailer just had too many enemies. "He slugged everyone," Arthur says. "I couldn't really focus on one antagonist. So he's kind of a recurring thread." B.K.


LITERARY FEUDS
A CENTURY OF CELEBRATED QUARRELS—FROM MARK TWAIN TO TOM WOLFE
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ERNEST HEMINGWAY vs GERTRUDE STEIN
SINCLAIR LEWIS vs THEODORE DREISER
EDMUND WILSON vs VLADIMIR NABOKOV
C. P. SNOW vs F. R. LEAVIS
LILLIAN HELLMAN vs MARY McCARTHY
TRUMAN CAPOTE vs GORE VIDAL
TOM WOLFE vs JOHN UPDIKE
ANTHONY ARTHUR

WRY VS. WRY: Anthony Arthur tells us why quiet writers make such great fighters.

The Written Word

Jonathan Safran Foer and Paul Muldoon
Foer, the author of *Everything Is Illuminated*, reads from his work with the renowned poet Muldoon, whose latest collection is *Moy Sand and Gravel*. • 12/10 at 7:30 P.M. Russian Samovar, 256 W. 52nd St. (212-757-0168); $3.

Sherman Alexie and Chuck Wachtel
Alexie, the Native American writer whose most recent collection is *The Toughest Indian in the World*, reads from his verse along with novelist and poet Wachtel. • 12/11 at 8 P.M. Poetry Project, 131 E. 10th St. (212-674-0910); $10.

Peter Jennings and Todd Brewster
The news anchor and his *Century* co-author sign copies of their latest coffee-table cash cow, *In Search of America*. • 12/12 at 1 P.M. Barnes & Noble, 600 Fifth Ave., at 48th St. (212-765-0592); free.

Angelo Verga
The poet reads from recent work, including his new collection, *A Hurricane Is*. • 12/13 at 7 P.M. Cornelia St. Café, 29 Cornelia St. (212-989-9319); $6 includes free drink.

Paule Marshall
The pioneering African-American author talks about her life and long career. • 12/14 at 2 P.M. Brooklyn Public Library, Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn (718-230-2100); free.

Scroogeday
A reading featuring some of today's hottest literati is a holiday version of Bloomsday, with questions and a raffle afterward. (See box.) • 12/14 at 3 P.M. Housing Works, 126 Crosby St. (212-334-3324); $10, children 12 and under free.

Victor LaValle
The Queens-born author of the collection *Slapboxing With Jesus* reads from his vibrant first novel, *The Ecstatic*. • 12/15 at 7 P.M. KGB, 85 E. 4th St. (212-505-3360); free.

Robert Pinsky and Robert Hass
Two former U.S. poet laureates read new and classic poetry from their extensive bodies of work. • 12/16 at 8 P.M. 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (212-415-5500); $16.

Patricia Volk
The author and gourmand reads from her recent book, *Stuffed: Adventures of a Restaurant Family*, newly out in paperback. • 12/17 at 8 P.M. National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park So. (212-475-3424); free.

Special Events

Tours

Behind the Scenes at the *Times*
Go deep inside the paper's headquarters, meet some of its staff, eat at its cafeteria, and have a last look at the building, soon to be forsaken for new digs. • 12/12 at 11 A.M. (212-684-6186 for reservations and meeting place); $20.

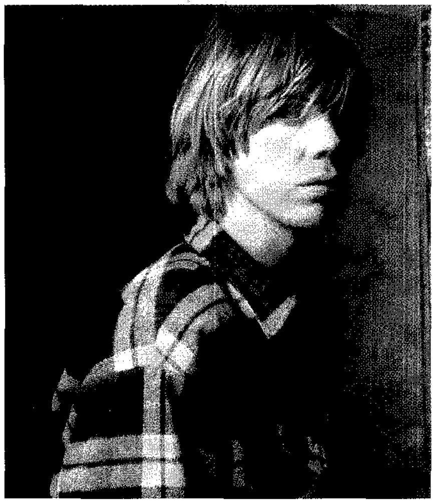
Victorian Christmas
A jaunt across the city's Victorian areas—Gramercy Park, Ladies Mile, and Chelsea—provides a holiday journey heavy on history and light on tourist traps. • 12/14 and 12/15 at noon and 2:30 P.M. (212-465-3331 for reservations and meeting place); $13.

Cobble Hill
A trip to Smith Street and the restored residences and

Season's Readings

Is Dickens the new Joyce? The annual celebration of Bloomsday (the quintessential Irish modernist's holiday, on which *Ulysses* took place) has become a staple June 16 event at Symphony Space, where writers and actors read at great length before Upper West Side crowds. Hoping to kick off its own tradition on December 14, Housing Works Used Book Café draws young A-list authors to Scroogeday, a (much shorter) group reading aimed at bringing a little downtown cachet to Dickens's overadapted *A Christmas Carol*. Jonathan Lethem, Vince Passaro, Darin Strauss, Mary Gaitskill, Adam Haslett, Gary Shteyngart, and Jonathan Ames are among the readers, with the middle-aged but eternally hip Sonic Youth guitarist Thurston Moore thrown in for good measure. (See "The Written Word.")

SOME MOORE, PLEASE: Sonic Youth's guitarist joins downtown literati to read from *A Christmas Carol*.



storefronts of the gentrified Brooklyn enclave wraps up just in time for brunch. • 12/15, 10:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. (212-415-5500 for reservations and meeting place); $25.

Grand Central Terminal
The holidays are the best (laser-light show, gift shopping) and worst (crowds) time to see New York's great station. Learn about the landmark's creation, renovation, and lasting significance. • 12/15 at 1 P.M. Meet at the Whitney Midtown, Park Ave. and 42nd St. (212-242-5762); $12.

Greenwich Street Open Studios
The lofty downtown thoroughfare is home to a plethora of studios, many of them open to art historian Hedy Kremen's tour. • 12/15 at 1 P.M. (212-415-5500 for reservations and meeting place); $35.

Benefits

"A Night of Hip-Hop Theater"
Highlights from the upcoming Hip-Hop Theater Festival, featuring work from Danny Hoch and others, are introduced by "New York Undercover" 's Malik Yoba and benefit the June festival. • 12/11, reception and auction 6 P.M., performance 8 P.M., after-party all night. Harry Du Jur Playhouse, 446 Grand St. (718-782-2621); $40.

***Star Trek Nemesis* Benefit**
A screening of the movie attended by Patrick Stewart and other cast members is followed by a shuttle to champagne and dessert, with proceeds going to Direct Effect's HIV-AIDS research programs. • 12/11 at 8 P.M. Clearview Beekman Theatre, 1254 Second Ave., at 65th St.; reception at Guastavino's, 409 E. 59th St. (212-448-5163); $200.

NY Women in Film Luncheon
NYWIFT recognizes Frances McDormand, Kate McEnroe, Lois Smith, and Alfre Woodard for their achievements at a gala hosted by Linda Ellerbee. • 12/12 at 11:30 A.M. Grand Ballroom, New York Hilton & Towers, 1335 Sixth Ave., at 54th St. (212-838-6033); $200 and up.

UJA-Federation Art Auction
The organization's Russian division sponsors its fourth annual auction, offering work of varying value from mostly young Russian Jewish artists, with proceeds going to the foundation and the Israel Emergency Fund. • 12/12 at 6:30 P.M. Daylight Studio, 450 W. 31st St., eighth fl. (212-836-1537); $30 admission goes toward art purchases.

Exhibits

Holiday Garden and Train Show
The eleventh annual show is more than child's play, with 1,000 feet of large-gauge track, intricate re-creations of city scenes, and newly added miniature landmarks. • Through 1/5/03. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx River Pkwy. at Fordham Rd. (718-817-8700); $10.

"Freedom: A History of Us"
Rare photos and artifacts are included in a wide-ranging exhibit covering the nation's history through World War II. • 12/10 through 1/26/03. The New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St. (212-873-3400); $6.

Other Events

"Fêtes de Noël"
The city's Parisian-styled Bryant Park bites off another French tradition—seasonal outdoor shopping—hosting dozens of artisans as well as booths from Ellis Island and the Natural History museum. Weekend entertainment, music, readings, and the brand-new carousel should keep the mood festive. • Through 12/24. Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. (212-472-1522); free.

New York Armory Antiques Show
Decorative old stuff from more than 85 dealers will be on hand at reasonable prices just in time for the holidays. • 12/11, 4 to 8:30 P.M.; 12/12 through 12/14, noon to 8:30 P.M.; 12/15, noon to 6 P.M. Seventh Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 67th St. (212-472-1180); $10.

Poets House Holiday Book Sale
The thousands of collections, anthologies, biographies, chapbooks, and journals you'll find here are largely unavailable at your local bookstore—and certainly not at the bargain prices offered for these duplicates of the house's extensive holdings. • 12/12 through 12/14 from 11 A.M.; 12/12 until 5 P.M., 12/13 until 7 P.M., 12/14 until 4 P.M. Poets House, 72 Spring St., second floor (212-431-7920); free.

Sports

"Lights in the Heights"
Take a leisurely and very cold bike ride down to the "miracle mile" of Christmas lights in Dyker Heights, Brooklyn. • 12/13 at 7 P.M. Meet by City Hall on Chambers and Centre St. or at 7:45 P.M. at 3rd St. and Prospect Park West in Brooklyn (212-802-8222); free.

College Basketball Doubleheader
First, watch two random teams who actually made it through the first round of last year's wacky NCAA tourney—Xavier vs. Mississippi State. For the main event, St. John's meets Hofstra in a classic New York battle. • 12/14 at noon. Madison Square Garden, Seventh Ave. at 32nd St. (212-307-7171); $21.50–$34.50.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DANNY CLINCH/CORBIS OUTLINE.

Solutions to last week's puzzles

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cue

Kids

Edited by Susan Avery

Events

For Children

Let the Game Begin

In the "Dance Improv Game Show" at the Kitchen, the audience tells the contestants what to do. (See box.) • 12/14 at 2 P.M.; the Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. (212-255-5793, ext. 11, or thekitchen.org); $10.

Ballet in Brooklyn

The Brooklyn Children's Museum, which recently received an award of honor from President Bush, offers up a ballet workshop for kids to learn and practice pirouettes, pliés, and the like. The class will be taught by members of Ailey II. • 12/15 from 2:30 to 3:30 P.M.; Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718-735-4400 or brooklynkids.org); free with $4 admission.

A Regular Cutup

Learn the ancient Japanese art of origami. Kids will learn paper-folding and paper-cutting from Helen Lin, an experienced craftsperson whose works have been exhibited at the Met. • 12/14 at 2:30 P.M.; West New Brighton Branch Library, 976 Castleton Ave., Staten Island (718-442-1416 or nypl.org); 12/21 at 2:30 P.M.; Chatham Square Regional Branch, 33 E. Broadway (212-964-6598 or nypl.org); free.

Piece of Cake

Construct and decorate your own gingerbread house at Alley Pond Environmental Center. Take home your masterpiece. For kids ages 9 to 12. Space is limited. Preregistration suggested. • 12/14 from 1 to 3 P.M.; Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd., Douglaston (718-229-4000); $20.

Felix and Phil

Tony Randall narrates *Peter and the Wolf* at the Young People's Concert of the New York Philharmonic. Preshow activity: An interactive music fair opens at 12:45 P.M. • 12/15 at 2 P.M.; Lincoln Center, Avery Fisher Hall, Broadway and 65th St. (212-875-5656 or newyorkphilharmonic.org); $5–$23.

A Stitch in Time

The Whitney Museum wants to turn overscheduled city kids into calm quilters. Materials provided. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Preregistration required. For kids ages 5 to 10. • 12/14 from 9 to 11 A.M.; Whitney Museum of American Art, 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St. (212-570-7745 or whitney.org); $8 per family.

Babes in Connecticut's Toyland

A full-scale version of *Babes in Toyland* comes to Bridgeport's Playhouse on the Green. Keep time to "March of the Wooden Soldiers" as kids meet the whimsical characters of this beloved seasonal musical. • Through 12/29, plus a New Year's Eve performance at 7:30 P.M.; Playhouse on the Green, 177 State St., Bridgeport, Conn. (203-333-3666 or playhouseonthegreen.org); $25.

Kwanzaa With the Dinosaurs

Yeah, they've been there on a school trip, but when was the last time *you* took your kids to the American Museum of Natural History? Every weekend through January 5, the museum celebrates the holiday season with choruses and strolling buskers. Check out the origami tree with more than 4,000 folded pieces of art and the Kwanzaa marketplace, which includes candle lighting, dancing, and storytelling. Say hello to the two cheery dinos bedecked in pine boughs. • Through 1/5; American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West and 79th St. (212-769-5100 or amnh.org).

Nutcracker Lite

New York Theatre Ballet's *The Nutcracker* is an enchanting one-hour performance that's the perfect starter ballet for the youngest set. The small-theater setting keeps kids feeling like they're part of the show. Fidgeters welcome. • 12/14, 12/15, 12/21, 12/22 at 11 A.M. and 1 and 3:30 P.M., Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160 or nytb.org); $25 grown-ups, $20 kids.

Onstage

Whose Move Is It Anyway?

Anyone who's been a part of a TV-studio audience knows that it can be kind of lame—especially applauding on cue. But this Saturday, at the **Dance Improv Game Show**, you applaud only if you mean it. At the Kitchen, families not only will be audience members but will play writers as well, coming up with wacky ideas for the contestants to act out. In a variation on *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*, the British show brought Stateside by Drew Carey, four dancers compete to improvise scenes suggested by the audience. "Audience members may be pulled onstage, or the dancers might come into the audience and do a stunt," says Kitchen curator Treva Offutt. "It's open to any kind of interpretation, and you never know what's going to happen." Families are encouraged to wear loose clothing, since the first item on the agenda is a group warm-up, both physical and vocal, in the style of a stage performer. The game begins after a brief showcase of each contestant's abilities. "The artists like to be challenged," adds Offutt. "They don't ordinarily get suggestions from children, so they're looking forward to what they have to say." Aren't we all? S.A.

ACTING OUT: At the Kitchen's Dance Improv Game Show, audience suggestions direct the performance.

Sales & Bargains

Continued from page 50

off ($50 to $130). 153 W. 27th St., Ste. 700 (212-727-0832); cash only; 12/11–12/13 (11–8).

Veronique's sharp maternitywear is 20 to 70 percent off. 1321 Madison Ave., at 93rd St. (212-831-7800); A.E., M.C., V.; 12/16–1/12 (Mon.–Thurs. 10–7; Fri. and Sat. 10–6; Sun. noon–5).

Girls' Vacation Fund is selling discounted Phat Farm, Enyce, and Tommy Hilfiger to benefit low-income New York kids. P.S. 242, 134 W. 122nd St. (212-532-7050); A.E., M.C., V.; 12/15 (noon–6).

Cristina Ruales's whimsical knitwear is 50 to 80 percent off ($35 to $215). 744 Broadway, at Bleecker St. (917-690-6791); A.E., M.C., V.; 12/16, 12/17, 12/19 (10–6).

Alice Goldsmith's earthy, handmade porcelain dinnerware is $10 to $50. 214 W. 29th St., tenth fl. (212-695-9607); cash only; 12/12 (4–8); 12/13 (11–7); 12/14 (11–3).

Vivienne Westwood is taking 60 to 75 percent off her wild British fashion ($50 to $5,000). 71 Greene St. (212-334-5200); A.E., M.C., V.; 12/12–12/14 (noon–6); 12/15 (noon–5).

Foundation is offering 20 to 50 percent off sleek, colorful home furnishings and accessories ($48 to $3,100). 329 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn (718-403-9757); A.E., M.C., V.; through 12/31 (Tues.–Fri. 11–7; Sat. noon–7; Sun. noon–6).

Norma Kamali is clearing a collection of vintage and one-of-a-kind pieces ($100 or less). 11 W. 56th St., third fl. (212-957-9797); A.E., M.C., V.; 12/16–1/18 (Mon.–Sat. 10–6).

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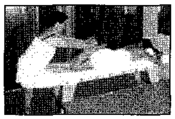

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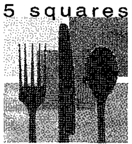

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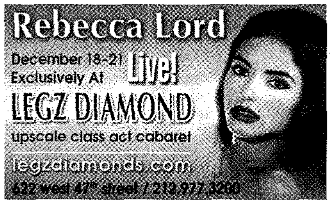

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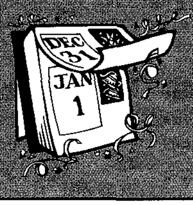

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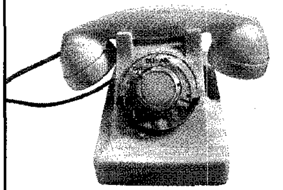

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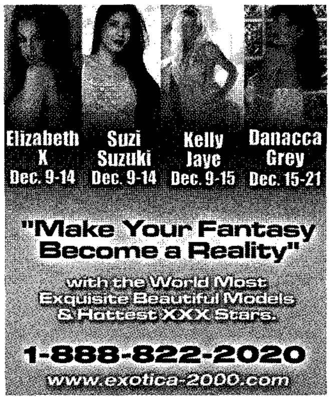
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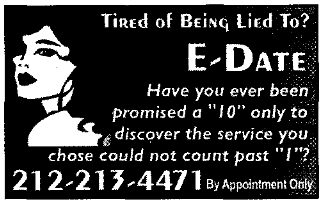
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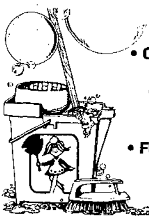

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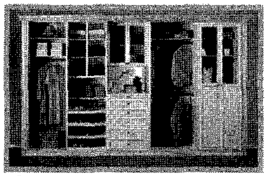

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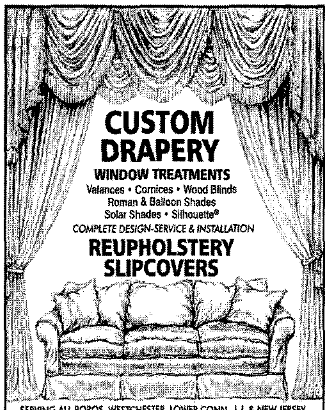

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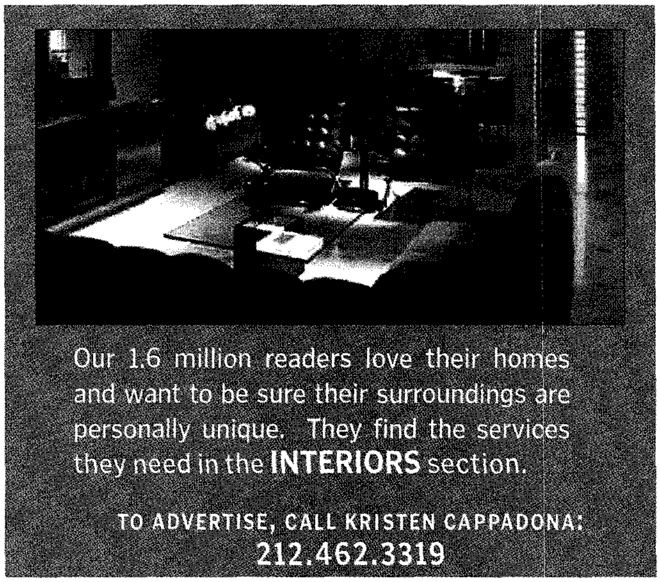

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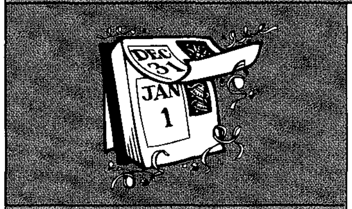

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NAKED CITY AMY SOHN

MOB SCENE

Three guys from Carroll Gardens who "do things" take the writer out for a night on the town and introduce her to meaning of the word *goomah*.

"*THE SOPRANOS* IS BULLshit," my friend Frankie Boy is explaining as we drive through the meatpacking district in his leased Lexus. "We're real. We meet people and we make them laugh. Most guys go up to a girl and say, 'You look good.' I'll go up to a girl and say, 'What's your fucking problem?' We go to clubs in sneakers. We look like bums. But we glow."

Frankie Boy, 27, is short with dark eyebrows and lives with his parents in Carroll Gardens. He earns $13 an hour grinding coffee but wears a $6,800 Cartier watch. He says he was able to pay for it, and the car, because "I do things."

We're on our way to Pastis to meet up with his friends "D.P." and "Gallo," who are also from Carroll Gardens and "do things" too. The guys go out three to four times a week. They eat dinner at Blue Ribbon Sushi or Pastis, then go to Lotus or Bungalow 8, drink, dance, and pick up girls. Despite the fact that they all have long-term girlfriends.

They used to spend a lot more money, dropping a grand in a night between them, but lately they've reined things in. In June, Gallo was arrested along with sixteen members and associates of the Gambino family and charged with operating an illegal gambling business.

When we walk into Pastis, Gallo and D.P. are waiting at a round table, looking freshly scrubbed and gelled. They're dressed in snorkel jackets, jeans, and sneakers. Gallo is 27 and stocky, with a piggish grin; D.P., 28, good-looking but sinister. We order steak and vodka tonics and I lay into them. "Why do you guys cheat?"

"Sometimes your girlfriend gets on your nerves," says Gallo. "You take care of her, you treat her good, but you cheat on her on the reg."

"Do your girlfriends know?"

"They think we're working," says D.P., shaking his head. "Out doing business, politicking."

"How can you cheat and feel no guilt?"

"There's no deliberate hurt," Gallo chimes in. "I know it's wrong. I wear a condom. And we don't bring the FBs by."

"What's an FB?"

"A filthy bastard. A girl who will sleep with anybody and do practically anything."

"It doesn't look good," Frankie Boy tells me. "She's got one of those friends —the mean sober one—who keeps an eye on her all night."

"It seems like a lot of trouble," I say. "Why not just break up with your girlfriends and have all the sex you want?"

"You have to have someone you could bring home to family affairs," says Gallo. "Someone who could bring the drycleaning in."

"This is the difference between a wife and a *goomah*," Frankie Boy says. "You're on a ship with your wife and your *goomah*, the ship's about to sink, and you can only save one. Who do you save? Your wife. Because your *goomah*, she understands."

I ask them if their steadies are Italian, and they respond with a chorus of belligerent nos. They are all Puerto Rican girls who live with their parents, too.

"White girls are all spoiled rotten," says Gallo. "Spanish girls appreciate things, like if you buy them a drink, open a door."

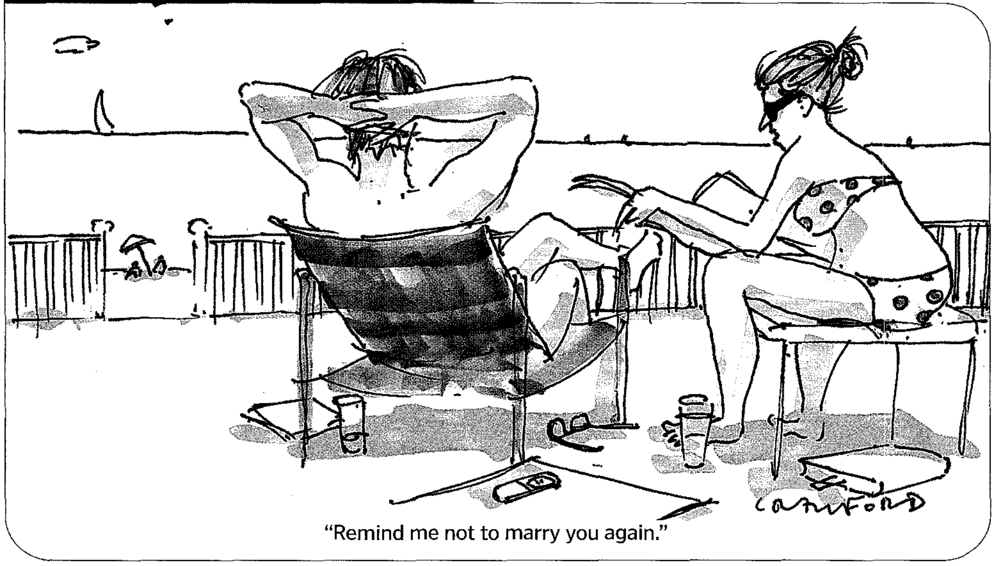
"Buy their kids' diapers," says D.P. Another chorus of raucous laughter.

I look around at the three of them and I can't quite figure it out. Granted, they're built, but they're not movie-star handsome, and their clothes are more Roc-A-Fella than goodfella.

"What do girls see in you?" I ask.

"We make them laugh," says D.P. "Once you make them laugh, the looks are off their mind. But we're not looking for girlfriends. We're looking for FBs."

Sex Appeals By Michael Crawford


"Remind me not to marry you again."

ON A COLD, RAINY SUNDAY NIGHT, Frankie Boy and Gallo take me to Lotus for their favorite party, Sunday Industry Night. We go up to the VIP section, where they greet the bouncer, who immediately ushers us in. Their friends—half a dozen girls—are waiting at a table, all in their twenties, attractive, and tipsy. As we make our way to the table, we pass Gisele Bündchen and Carmen Kass, and the actor Adrien Brody, who's taking photos on a tiny digital camera.

Frankie Boy and Gallo hoist themselves up onto the banquette, feet on the seat, as is the style, and order a bottle of

Grey Goose for $350. A cute Lolita-esque girl next to Frankie Boy lights up a Marlboro. "This girl's dirty," he tells me. "I can see it in her eyes."

They talk for a while, and then he notices another girl, next to the first, eyeing him suspiciously. "It doesn't look good," he says. "She's got one of those friends, the mean sober one who keeps an eye on her all night."

A blunt gets passed around, and Gallo gets up and starts dancing with a petite woman in a tight white V-neck. Her back is to his front, and I notice his hand creeping up her skirt. "What's sexy about him?" I ask her.

"He's Gallo," she says, shrugging.

In the morning, Gallo calls and says he got lucky—with a girl he already knew, after the V-neck left. He says he was ignoring her deliberately, knowing it would get her fired up.

As it turns out Frankie Boy got lucky, too. "After you left, an all-American-looking blonde, really not my type, grabbed my sweatshirt and said, 'You look really good in that sweatshirt.' " They danced and made out on the dance floor. She asked if they could go home, and he told her he lived with his parents, so she took him to her place on St. Marks.

The apartment was a mess, he says, and there were cats everywhere. She pushed him right to the couch. "She didn't even give me a chance to think. Boom. All she wanted to do was blow me. I couldn't walk when I got out of there."

Half of me thinks he's making it up, but his tone is one of incredulity, not braggadocio.

"She handled it like an animal. The cats were driving me crazy. I was starting to sneeze. There was one on my shoulder, one on the side, another on my head, meow, meow. After I came the second time, she said, 'Honey, I'm a little tired now.' I said, 'Well, help me up.' I sat in the cab all the way home with my mouth open. We'll see what happens. Maybe I met my soul mate." ■

READY TO MEET YOUR MATCH? GO TO

strictlypersonal.com

You can reach out to these and lots of other single New Yorkers on our very own, easy-to-use Website. Better yet, post your own ad and let the world beat a path to your door (or in-box).

WOMEN

caramel_smile

Looking for: A man

Age: 34

Occupation: Editor-singer-model

Favorite on-screen sex scene: *Bound* and *The Hunger* pop to mind.

Celebrity I resemble most: Whoever the multiculti, honey-cinnamon-skin flavor of the month is today.

If I could be anywhere at the moment: On the pure white-sand beaches of Málaga with my big straw hat, a bottle of Rioja, a good book, and your hand on my thigh—yes, it's cheesy, but it works.

The five items I can't live without: My cello, my comb, my forties pearl-gray silk nightie, anything black leather, copies of *One Hundred Years of Solitude, The Stand, Invisible Man,* and *The Once and Future King,* my perfectly aged CYCLE SLUTS FROM HELL T-shirt.

grrl_scientist

Looking for: A man

Age: 36

Occupation: Research scientist and freelance writer

Last great book I read: I cried when I finished reading *The Wind in the Willows* as an adult because—barring the effects of senility—I will never have the pleasure of reading that book again for the first time!

If I could be anywhere at the moment: I'd be in the South Pacific ocean on a volcanic island whose sandy shores are created from the pulverized bodies of countless corals. I'd be sitting in the shade of pandanus trees, watching birds, reading books, and, later, skinny-dipping with you, my special one, in the bright tropical moonlight.

Why you should get to know me: I am intelligent, independent, kinda funny, open, and real. My enthusiasm and curiosity for new experiences usually overshadow my inherent shyness.

Who I'm looking for: A nice, good-looking guy who wants to tell me funny stories and taste olives at Fairway or Zabar's.

chelseakitchen

Looking for: A man

Age: 29

Occupation: Publisher

Last great book I read: *The Corrections.* I wouldn't call it great.

Most humbling moment: Being "between apartments" my first week in the city.

Celebrity I resemble most: Anaïs Nin.

If I could be anywhere at the moment: Sailing around the world with the Merchant Marines.

Song or album that puts me in the mood: Al Stewart's *Year of the Cat.* Anything by Rachmaninoff.

Fill in the blanks: Humor is sexy; wit is sexier.

In my bedroom, you'll find: A view of the fire escape.

galewinds

Looking for: A man

Age: 46

Occupation: Producer

Last great book I read: *Tuesdays With Morrie.*

Most humbling moment: Winning an Emmy—no, really, I did.

If I could be anywhere at the moment: In the country with my future husband, my doggy, and my allotted 2.5 kids.

The five items I can't live without: My two laptops, my phone, my bike, a hair tie, and my dog.

Fill in the blanks: Stroking my dog is sexy; stroking me is sexier.

Why you should get to know me: Because I am a character, and you'll never be bored with me around.

mlr511

Looking for: A man

Age: 39

Occupation: Artistic entrepreneur

Most humbling moment: I usually have one or two a week.

Favorite on-screen sex scene: *The Big Easy—Dennis Quaid and Ellen* Barkin when she lets go and enjoys the pleasure of his hands.

If I could be anywhere at the moment: Having great sex in a beautiful Parisian hotel, NYC hotel, parking lot . . .

The five items I can't live without: Sketchpad-journal, cell phone, gym membership, iMac, my shower hose.

Fill in the blanks: Eye contact is sexy; being asked questions by a guy I *like* is sexier.

Why you should get to know me: I am high-energy and lazy, funny and serious, smart and naïve, sophisticated and bohemian. I live life with abandon, and I've got my feet planted firmly on the ground.

junemoonchild29

Looking for: A man

Age: 26

Occupation: Medical biller

Last great book I read: *Youth in*

online & on air

THIS WEEK ON METROTV

cyberdiva

I believe in sensory overload.

Weeknights at 7:30 P.M., 11:30 P.M., and 1:30 A.M., STRICTLY PERSONAL, MetroTV's sexy new show, introduces you to eight to ten single New Yorkers. You may be just what they're looking for.

Sexual Ecstasy.
Celebrity I resemble most: Ashanti.
The five items I can't live without: Water, lipstick, phone, electricity, and a bed.
Fill in the blanks: Ashanti is sexy; J.Lo is sexier.
In my bedroom, you'll find: Porcelain dolls and Victorian decoration.
Why you should get to know me: Here I go: I am currently living in Washington Heights, I am from the Dominican Republic, my country is filled with beautiful people and rhythms. I love music and dancing.
More about who I'm looking for: I am looking for a strong-minded, handsome, funny, successful intellectual (not a geek), a sensitive and communicative man. Someone outgoing with strong family values.

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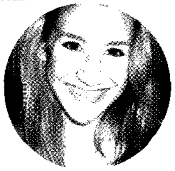
betweentwoevils

Looking for: A man
Age: 25
Occupation: Hospital administration



Last great book I read: *Interpreter of Maladies,* Jhumpa Lahiri.
Favorite on-screen sex scene: John Malkovich and Uma Thurman, *Dangerous Liaisons.*
If I could be anywhere at the moment: On an island in Greece, raising olive trees and growing goats.
The five items I can't live without: Macaroni and cheese, wine, toothpaste, a pen, really sexy shoes.
Fill in the blanks: Clever is sexy; contrary is sexier.
In my bedroom, you'll find: Too many CDs, a huge pile of books, more belly-dancing instructional videos than any one person should own.
Why you should get to know me: My socks don't match. I laugh too loud. I'm full of useless information. I can beat you up . . . but I probably won't.

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jaye32

Looking for: A man
Age: 32
Last great book I read: *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho, a book about following your dreams that is truly inspirational.
Song or album that puts me in the mood: These are artists that I enjoy: Nuyorican Soul, Miles Davis, A Tribe Called Quest, Jill Scott, Stevie Wonder, Prince, Bilal.
Why you should get to know me: " 'Cause I'm a whole lotta woman!" I consider myself a gem and expect anyone I interact with to treat me that way. I am a well-educated, single, childless, successful woman. I am fun-loving, witty, and kinda (okay, very) smart. I am one of the most trustworthy people you will ever meet, and I love to dance. If you are really special, I will cook for you and then you will be hooked! I have been called a social butterfly on numerous occasions and am spontaneous and adventurous. I am well traveled and willing to take a trip on a moment's notice.

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devilpie

Looking for: A man
Age: 29
Occupation: Conductor—not trains or music

Favorite on-screen sex scene: Pure sex: *Caligula.* Emotional sex: *Y Tu Mamá También.* Reality sex: *8 Mile.*
Celebrity I resemble most: I've been told Mia Farrow, when she was young.
If I could be anywhere at the moment: I'm pretty happy right here. Alternate options: breezy, briny beach, burrowing with a beloved. Bundled in bed under blankets in a blizzard. Blowing by bystanders on my bike. Banging a boy. Being bewildered by the bounty befallen me.
Fill in the blanks: Soft hair is sexy; soft skin is sexier.
In my bedroom, you'll find: My soul decorated in shades of blue. And a humidifier. Does anyone else's heat feel like the flames of hell?
Why you should get to know me: My skin feels like suede.
More about who I'm looking for: Soft skin, nice shoulders, quirky smile, clean teeth. A belief in some cosmic plan is important, too.

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unforgettable

Looking for: A man
Age: 46
Occupation: Office manager

Favorite on-screen sex scene: *The End of the Affair.* As he is putting her stockings on . . .
If I could be anywhere at the moment: I wouldn't be here.
Song or album that puts me in the mood: *The Specialist* soundtrack. Babyface, Teddy Pendergrass, Barry White, Ozzy Osbourne, Red Hot Chili Peppers . . .
Why you should get to know me: 'Cause I'm fun to be with? 'Cause I look good and cook a great lasagna? No, huh? Okay. Why don't you see for yourself?
More about who I'm looking for: Not your average bear. . . . He should have a sense of humor, passion, like kissing, be above average in looks (sorry, I know beauty comes from within, so if you're good-looking but an a-hole, that's not going to work either), caring, easy to get along with (because I am), loyal, considerate, good-hearted, classy, charismatic, stylish, financially secure, stable, and *not* a control freak.

Tattooedsurfer

Looking for: A man
Age: 29
Last great book I read: *The Rules : Time Tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr. Right.* Just kidding. *Huck Finn.* For the twentieth time.
Best (or worst) lie I've ever told: I'm training to be an American Gladiator.
In my bedroom you'll find: My stuffed-animal collection, my spitting-contest trophies, the decaying remains of a few ex-boyfriends, a life-size statue of the Virgin Mary, my Backstreet Boys poster . . .
Why you should get to know me: I'm smart. I have great breasts. I hate shopping. I'll never ask you if you think I'm fat.

MEN

capkaos

Looking for: A woman
Age: 35
Occupation: Computer programmer

Most humbling moment: Seeing a baby being born.
Celebrity I resemble most: I hope and pray to God I don't resemble any celebrity.
Song or album that puts me in the mood: Earth, Wind & Fire.
The five items I can't live without: My mom, my pets, two dogs, two cats, and two cockatoos, cable modem, eight nephews and nieces, and a king-size bed.
In my bedroom, you'll find: Books, TV, computer, a lot of pets running around.
Why you should get to know me: No threat at all, love to relax. I am honest, loyal, I am bad at playing head games, I have been lucky to have some charm and wit, nothing bugs me unless I see someone mean to women or animals or kids, and I spoil and adore women.

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goofyintellect

Looking for: A woman
Age: 28
Occupation: Attorney

Favorite on-screen sex scene: Miss Piggy and Kermit (okay, I guess they never actually did get together on-screen—but you must admit that would have been interesting).
Best (or worst) lie I've ever told: Too many to list. I am a lawyer, after all!
The five items I can't live without: Books, warm summer days, the New York *Times,* love, some means of communication (phone or Internet or at least a walkie-talkie).
Why you should get to know me: I really am a person of some contradictions. I am ambitious and in some respects have had a plan as to where I want to be someday all my life. But right now I am at

somewhat of a crossroads. I am still figuring out what constitutes a fulfilling life for me.
Who I'm looking for: I want to be with someone who challenges me. I am most attracted to a woman who sees the world differently, who has the intelligence to always make me think and wonder. But that intelligence needs to be wrapped up with a sense of humor. Intelligence I have found can sometimes make people cold.

fischtic

Looking for: A woman
Age: 31
Occupation: Filmmaker
Most humbling moment: Selling comedy-club tix. (Do you like comedy?) *Gah!*
Celebrity I resemble most: Superman.
Best (or worst) lie I've ever told: I respect your opinion and we'll have to agree to disagree.
If I could be anywhere at the moment: Nah Orleans.
Fill in the blanks: Smiling is sexy; laughing is sexier.
Why you should get to know me: Smart, charming, sensitive, good-looking (my mommy says I'm striking—heh-heh), driven, opinionated.

wojak

Looking for: A woman
Age: 33
Occupation: Builder of buildings
Most humbling moment: Realizing that trying to be humble is not the same as being humble.
Best (or worst) lie I've ever told: After the age of 13, lies aren't worth the effort.
If I could be anywhere at the moment: Where I am. Of course, I have a long list of places I want to visit. Languedoc is next.
Song or album that puts me in the mood: Nothing to get in the mood, but when in it, Stevie or Al always help, and, strangely, Dionne Farris.

online & on air

THIS WEEK ON METROTV

dosel

Fill in the blanks: *Thriller* is sexy; *Off the Wall* is sexier.

Weeknights at 7:30 P.M., 11:30 P.M., and 1:30 A.M., STRICTLY PERSONAL, MetroTV's sexy new show, introduces you to eight to ten single New Yorkers. You may be just what they're looking for.

Fill in the blanks: Ethereal is sexy; visceral is sexier.
Why you should get to know me: Because I'm fun and funny, believe conversations should be two-way, enjoy doing things and sometimes nothing, believe in manners.

rudrananda

Looking for: A woman
Age: 30
Occupation: Screenwriter-journalist
If I could be anywhere at the moment: Meditating on the banks of the Ganges in Varanasi. Or wandering La Rue des Ecoles in Paris smoking a Gitanes. Naked, sunburnt, and high at Burning Man. Or riding on horseback through Afghanistan with a whip and a pistol, feeding refugees and searching for hidden treasure. That all sounds good to me.
Why you should get to know me: This last New Year's Eve: I climbed a mountain. By myself. Under the full moon. Sat on the edge of a tiny precipice over a 3,000-foot drop down to a forest and the ocean, got high, and did some rituals (it was a Chumash Indian holy site, this peak) while some good jazz and opera and hip-hop was playing from a little speaker on another precipice about 50 yards away. I worked through and let go of a lot of shit of this past year, let my feet dangle over the abyss and felt my soul pulsating with bliss. Truly. A profound sense of the moment, of the utter indescribable unrepeatable beauty of that moment.

kombinator

Looking for: A man
Age: 28
Occupation: Writer
Favorite on-screen sex scene: River Phoenix, Keanu Reeves, and Udo Kier in *My Own Private Idaho.*
Celebrity I resemble most: A younger, less puffy Morrissey.
If I could be anywhere at the moment: My grandmother's house back in Nowheresville, Oklahoma.
Song or album that puts me in the mood: "Loveless"—My Bloody Valentine. "Psycho Candy"—Jesus and Mary Chain. "Nowhere"—Ride. "Music Has the Right to Children"—Boards of Canada. "Long Division"—Low. Mogwai's "Young Team."
Fill in the blanks: Intensity is sexy; intelligence is sexier.
Why you should get to know me: My affable personality and easy charms will improve the quality of your life.

samyouel

Looking for: A woman
Age: 33
Occupation: Live-music industry
Most humbling moment: Recently, while at a hotel in Scotland, I bent over to pick up my travel bag that had fallen on the floor while I was getting out of the shower and burned my naked ass on a superheated towel rack. Branded for life . . .
Favorite on-screen sex scene: Anything with Natassja Kinski.
Song or album that puts me in the mood: How 'bout stuff I just like: Bowie, the Clash, Louie Armstrong, Wilco, and lots more.
In my bedroom, you'll find: Books, boxes, golf clubs, and an occasional unused tie.

Why you should get to know me: I have a great group of friends and a job everyone seems to think is cool. I love New York but am grounded by my former Midwest life. I'll cook for you and you will be impressed. I'll take you to great shows. You will not be bored and you will be always be laughing.
More about who I'm looking for: You may have a hidden talent that you know David Letterman would love for his stupid-human-tricks segment. No one would say of you: "She's rude to wait staff."

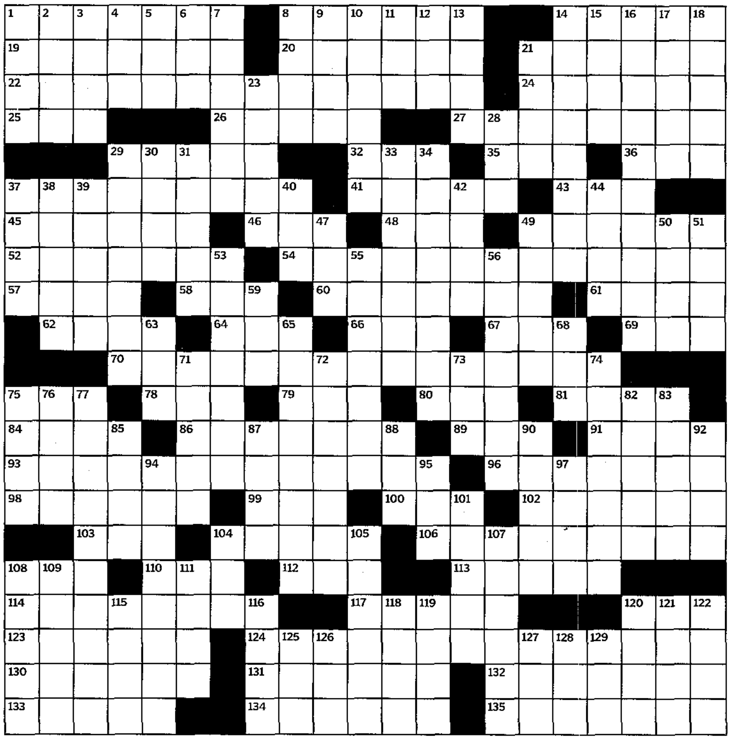
walking_fool

Looking for: A woman
Age: 32
Occupation: Graphic design
Last great book I read: *Be Cool* by Elmore Leonard and *Curious George Kills the Man in the Yellow Hat* by H. A. Rey.
Favorite on-screen sex scene: When my girlfriend and I were making out on the patio, we broke the screen door and finished up on-screen.
Celebrity I resemble most: Tom Cruise.
Best (or worst) lie I've ever told: That I look like Tom Cruise.
Song or album that puts me in the mood: Anything by Skinny Puppy or Dean Martin.
The five items I can't live without: My brain, my feet, my eyes, my ears, and pizza.
Fill in the blanks: Nudity is sexy; nudity near me is sexier.
Why you should get to know me: Who knows why anyone should get to know anyone else? But I do like to do fun things and hate to do un-fun things. So that might be a reason. I walked from NYC to South Dakota in thirteen weeks. That was fun. And I have more fun to do.
More about who I'm looking for: Someone who wants to come along for the fun.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE
To respond, log on to STRICTLYPERSONAL.COM and search by nickname. Even better, sign up for a free membership and place your own ad.

'Retrospective 2002'

'Cue' Crossword by Maura B. Jacobson



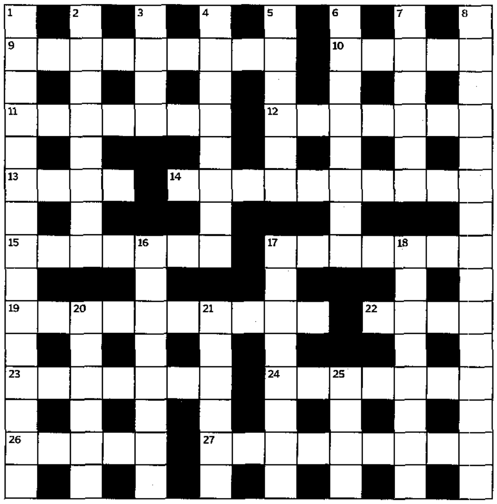
ACROSS

1 U.S. Open winner, 2002
8 Mar
14 Chatter idly
19 Generally
20 Eaten away
21 Alterations pro
22 Tour de France victor, 2002
24 Hun honcho
25 Zoo swinger
26 Oven expert
27 Hugs
29 Unadorned
32 Ellis or Staten: abbr.
35 Pierre's yes
36 Inhabitant of: suffix
37 Emmy-winning actor, 2002
41 Stock-market unit
43 Eggs, to Caesar
45 —— million
46 Seller's come-ons
48 Pk. or Lex. in N.Y.
49 Wagers
52 Rather masculine
54 Man in the 2002 news
57 Brad who played Joe Black
58 Carpenter's cutter
60 Certain horse races
61 Rookie
62 Try to find
64 Frequent @ follower in e-mail
66 Author of "The Raven"
67 Non-cleric: Fr.
69 Use a Singer
70 Stanley Cup winners, 2002
75 Ugandan first name
78 Become molded
79 Dernier —— (latest fashion)
80 Beer-pack number
81 Clumsy fellows
84 Mediocre
86 Get
89 Branch of Buddhism
91 White House turndown
93 World Series champs, 2002
96 New title for a Dole, 2002
98 Ramp's alternative
99 Flavor enhancer, for short
100 Tool set
102 Governing system
103 Debate side
104 Tachometer reading
106 Sarah Hughes's win, 2002
108 Shade of blond
110 Neighbor of Ore.
112 B'way hit info
113 Brothers of clinic fame
114 Our era
117 Pitched
120 No friend
123 Slugged unconscious
124 Oscar film, 2002
130 High concepts
131 One-dollar bill
132 Not ventilated
133 Hornets' homes
134 Sings like the Swiss
135 Actress Duncan, 2002 Tony winner

DOWN

1 Room in a casa
2 Kin of P.D.Q.
3 Lion's locks
4 National abbr. in Beijing
5 Be regretful
6 Between pie and mode
7 Where Belgrade is the capital
8 Worktable
9 Commedia dell'——
10 One of the Udalls
11 Shakespearean fuss
12 Col.'s superior
13 Brink
14 New England Super Bowl champs, 2002
15 Rio girl of song
16 Grammy winner, 2002
17 "For rent" sign
18 Make a dele
21 Clan ban
23 Heaven-sent Biblical food
28 Memorable Stooge
29 Wrote in block letters
30 "WKRP" star Anderson
31 Pile up
33 Valuable fish spawn
34 Areas formed from volcanic eruptions
37 Frolic about
38 Diarist Nin
39 "Fiddler on the Roof" matchmaker
40 Some E.R. cases
42 Duo after "do"
44 Extensive
47 Heavy-hearted
49 Black-eyed flower
50 Republic of Ireland
51 Flaky weather forecast
53 Dutch source of a Manhattan neighborhood
55 Keep from having
56 Spirals
59 Go courting
63 Rathskeller delivery
65 Governmental permits
68 Billy Joel's "—— to Extremes"
71 Garr and Hatcher
72 Roy Rogers's mount
73 Updated "Oz," with "The"
74 Uncivilized ones
75 A miss —— good as a mile
76 "Thou shalt not," nowadays
77 Rock Hall-of-Fame inductee, 2002
82 Smelly
83 Pore, in anatomy
85 Birthplace of seven Presidents
87 Tenting site
88 B.P.O.E. member
90 Like a dweeb
92 City northeast of Kiev
94 British Open golf champ, 2002
95 Freud, to friends
97 Verne's submarine captain
101 Marisa of "My Cousin Vinny"
104 Droop
105 Second childhood
107 Legal
108 Invite to enter
109 Gardener's item
111 June honorees
115 Outerwear
116 A snap
118 Ship's frame
119 Numbered rds.
120 Trees with needles
121 Top draft rating
122 MacDonald's singing partner
125 Life story, in brief
126 Bring to a close
127 Prefix with verse or form
128 O-—— (heroine of "The Good Earth")
129 "Home, Sweet Home" start

The 'Guardian' Crossword Set by Logodaedalus



ACROSS

9 To have more than one rum, but get tipsy. (9)
10 First lady in the House made clergyman lose his head. (5)
11 Oil able to be refined in plant. (7)
12 She loved Daddy spreading treacle. (7)
13 Emporium demands silence at work. (4)
14 Oscar's Lady of the Lake? (10)
15 One and ten are confused, of course. (7)
17 State day centre. (7)
19 The pot man accepts hard work from Rodin. (3,7)
22 Mother's side seen in skirt. (4)
23 Flushed character calls for player to be dismissed. (3,4)
24 Topper finds his talk is rambling. (4,3)
26 Organs with sounds I extracted. (5)
27 Official voice of the cyclist? (9)

DOWN

1 Very important to make everybody sing about a mad man. (5-10)
2 Mulish objections raised and natural to follow. (8)
3 Proper line for two people fighting. (4)
4 Rough supporter is standing in the avenue. (8)
5 Enthusiast embraced right partner. (6)
6 Keeping unattached and happy. (8)
7 Still figure of Ms. Barker describing rubbish. (6)
8 Anti-wrinkling can steer a sister off the rails. (6-9)
16 To prepare, he corrected with eraser. (8)
17 Horror of a kind. (8)
18 What makes a man hate the curse? (8)
20 In Gospel destined to be first. (6)
21 Sidney is held up by crackpot who's naked. (6)
25 They say faulty actor topped and tailed the worst parts. (4)

SOLUTIONS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES APPEAR ON PAGE 95.

LOVE IS
OUTPERFORMING
EVERYTHING
THIS YEAR

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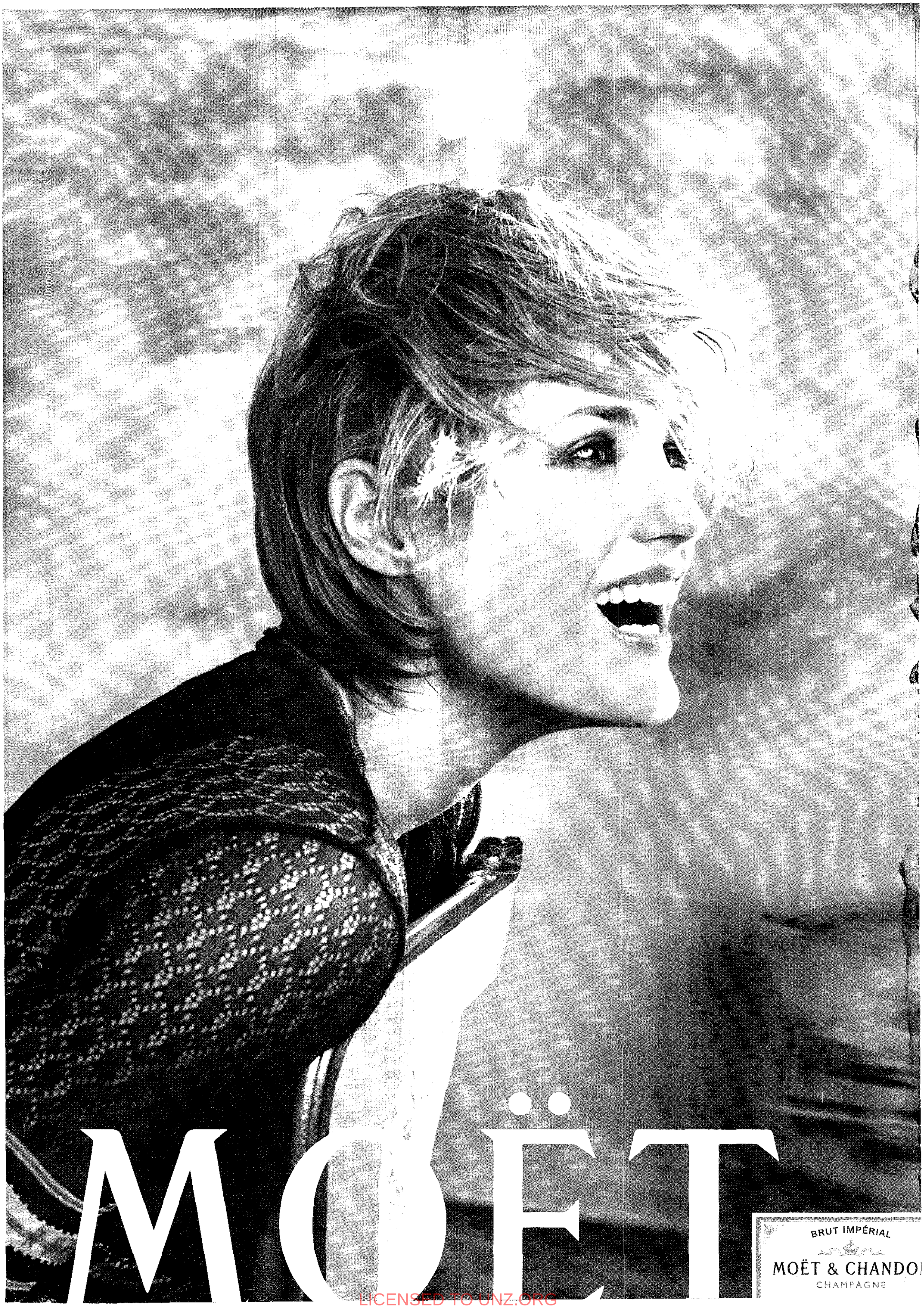
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